THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

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CHAPTERS I—XXXIII.

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

H. EWALD.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following work is a reproduction in English of part of Professor Ewald's great work, "Die Propheten des alten Bundes." It contains his translation and comment on the first thirty-three chapters. I have left out those notes which would be only intelligible to a few of the learned. The few Hebrew words inserted are given merely where an emendation has been made in the text: these emendations will be found very few, and will generally commend themselves.

It will be unnecessary here to extol a work which for appreciation of the Hebrew Prophets is unrivalled. This is admitted by those who lament what they consider its scepticism. Thus the author of the article on Isaiah in Smith's *Dictionary* pronounces it "absolutely indispensable for a just appreciation of the poetry." The charge of scepticism is based upon the fact, that the book as it at present stands is thought by Ewald to come not from one, but from several authors. So far as this view rests

on the variety in the Hebrew of the several parts, those only are entitled to challenge it whose intimate acquaintance with the language approaches his.

The variety is apparent in the translation in its broader features, but in its more delicate shades can only be fully discerned by the practised eye of a Hebrew scholar. The suggestion will however be generally at once rejected from a vague notion that it is in some way dangerous to the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. Now, it is true that the variety of authorship is maintained by some critics on purely rationalistic grounds; they would do away entirely with the predictive element; but it is not on such grounds that Ewald refers certain portions to a later date, and some to an earlier.

It cannot indeed be denied that there is a difference in the office and work of the prophet as conceived by him, and as held by the supporters of the traditionary view. The prophet is, with him, not one whose office is *generally* to satisfy curiosity as to the future, but rather to be a preacher of faith and righteousness: the future is revealed only so far as is necessary for the consoling or alarming the prophet's contemporaries. The one grand exception is the coming kingdom of the Messiah: but this exception goes far to prove the rule, for the coming of Christ was with this Prophet near at hand,

it was projected, so to speak, on his ordinary plane of vision.

The predictions of the fall of Babylon, and those of like date, we may suppose, without derogating from the true value of prophecy, were delivered to those whom they practically concerned. No one need fear having his view of the work and character of the prophets lowered through the study of Ewald's work; he admits to the fullest extent the claim put forth for them by Amos; "The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (iii. 7).

The fact of the disputed portions being found at present in one book is no certain warrant of their coming from the same hand. The case is very similar to that of the Book of the Prophet Zechariah. That we have there the work of at least two prophets, will be admitted by almost all critics: it is strongly maintained by Joseph Mede and by Abp. Newcome, two authorities of unquestionable orthodoxy. A passage from Chapter xi. is assigned by S. Matthew (xxvii. 9—10) to Jeremiah.

It remains to add a few words to meet an objection against the conception of prophecy which pervades Ewald's Work. The revelations then of prophecy are not intended to be limited in their application to one time or country; they are for all men in all ages. The special and divine

glory of Scripture prophecy consists in its power of adapting itself to man's ever-varying needs. It would lose this its power were we able to say, This prophecy does not concern us, it is for those who shall be living some thousand years hence. Prophesy, though it of necessity adapted itself to the thoughts and scenery amid which it was spoken, reveals lessons on God's wrath against injustice, impurity, and unbelief; on the blessedness of the righteous, the pure, and the believing which shall never lose their force and freshness. But further, not only, as I believe, do we thus put greater honour on prophecy, but the prophets themselves give us to understand that their teaching is of general truths: how far they shall continue applicable to any particular case depends on how far those to whom they were spoken shall remain the same. The common view of what prophecy *ought* to be was held by Jonah, but he has also recorded how God condemned it for its hardness and injustice. Jeremiah (xxvi.) tells us that when God foretells a punishment and man repents, then God repents of the evil He had intended to bring about. These few remarks may, I hope, lead some to read with a less prejudiced eye the following Work. I feel certain that no one who reads it will lay it down without feeling his admiration of the Book of Isaiah intensified; that it will come home to him with greatly increased vividness

and power: it will also, I trust, by making him better known, diminish the distrust and distaste with which this great thinker and scholar is generally regarded. A leading feature in all his writings is the prominence of the writer's inner being. We are not brought into contact with the head alone, nor with the heart alone, but with the two working together in entire harmony. In other words, rationalism with him never banishes spirituality, nor does spiritualism shun the free use of the reasoning powers.

My aim as Editor, I would observe in conclusion, has been not to discuss the views of Prof. Ewald, but simply faithfully to set them forth. The comment is given in a slightly condensed form: in the translation I have closely adhered to his German rendering. I perhaps ought to apologise to him for one verbal departure: the word which he writes *Jahre*, I have thought it necessary to write in the familiar form of *Jehovah*, this name being too intimately bound up with our religious associations ever to be superseded.

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CORRECTIONS.

Page 2, line 4, *for* proved *read* proud.
" 4, " 21, *for* towns *read* towers.
" 37, " 2, *for* Hero, God *read* Hero-God.
" 108, " 5, *for* here *read* never.

BOOK I.

THE EARLIEST WORK OF ISAIAH.

Ch. II. 2—v. 25. IX. 8—X. 4. v. 26—30.

THE following passages appear to have formed one discourse. At the time of its delivery the Assyrians had some time before made the northern kingdom tributary, but had not yet appeared as conquerors in Palestine. They were looked on in Judah only as a very remote but little known people, whose coming one day to punish the two weak kingdoms was foreboded by the Prophet alone (v. 26—30).

In Samaria, against which the discourse turns (ix. 7—20), king Pekah had begun to divert the internal divisions and licentiousness of his people into marauding expeditions against Judah, and thus at the same time strengthen his exhausted kingdom. These expeditions, which had commenced in the reign of Jotham, the father of Ahaz, had been directed against the neighbouring kingdoms and the border fortresses: not until the reign of Ahaz (vii. 1) had Jerusalem been threatened.

Ahaz had just come to the throne in his twentieth year: in the words of the Prophet, "the rulers of my people are a child, and

women rule over it," for Ahaz was not only young in years, but was also, as the history shews him, very weak and unmanly.

At this time Jerusalem was nearly undisturbed in that good fortune and proved security, to which it had become used under the preceding outwardly powerful kings. Elath, a port on the Red sea, had been conquered by his grandfather Uzziah. This and the wise policy of the kings had given a great impulse to commerce; the whole land enjoyed singular outward prosperity (ii. 7). Prophecies too, as that of Joel, might be appealed to, as promising a yet higher destiny for Jerusalem. But the extended commerce with foreigners had also brought in many foreign superstitions, loose morals (ii. 6, viii. 19), and gluttony and drunkenness; and the women, who in every kingdom are the index of its morality, had become wanton through luxury; the iniquity of the nobles, the corruption of the judges, and the persecution of the helpless country people; these evils, which had long been secretly creeping on, were stimulated by the weakness of the young king. The Prophet had under the former kings long denounced these evils, and threatened God's coming judgments; but his warning voice had been derided: they seemed secure under the protection of the peace concluded with the Assyrians, and God was outwardly honoured. Under these circumstances Isaiah broke forth in his denunciations of coming judgments.

Now, for the first time, he seems to have appeared as a writer: in this writing his experienced hand would be able to bring together much which he had orally delivered in the first sixteen or seventeen years of his prophetic mission. From the whole structure too, and the wild storm of its oratory, it is easily seen to belong to this earliest time of the mightiest of all Prophets.

This great discourse falls into three lesser ones:

A Judgment comes before the Happy Time (ii. 2, iv. 6).

The happy time promised by earlier prophets will indeed come, but not until severe judgment has first overtaken the proud men who have fallen from God. He begins with a quotation, common to him and Micah, which is probably from a lost work of Joel. But, alas! how can Israel, such as it now is, look for such a blessed time. Rather, they must creep away and hide them in the dust before His terrible coming. In the second strophe, the Prophet assures the people that such a day of judgment shall come; the third describes the nature of the judgment: the fourth points out more particularly why it must come. Each of these begins with the particle "for." After a fifth strophe, directed specially against the women, the discourse closes with the sixth, wherein it returns to the starting point; that then at length, after such severe judgments, the happy time will come with all its majesty.

1. (II. 2—11.)

And then at the end of the days shall the mountain of the Lord's House be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, so that all the heathen shall flow to it; and many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us of His ways and we may walk in His paths: for from Sion shall go forth the law, and Jehovah's word out of Jerusalem. There He judges among the heathen, and arbitrates among many nations, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of Jehovah. But thou hast rejected thy people the house of Jacob, because they are full of diviners* and stargazers like the Philistines, and use magic like the children of the strangers; and his land filled itself with silver and gold, so that his treasures have no end; and his land filled itself with warhorses, so that there was no end of his chariots; and his land filled itself with idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. For the mean man boweth down and the great man humbleth himself, and forgive them not. Go into the rock and hide thee in the dust before the terror of Jehovah and the glory of His majesty. The haughty looks of man fall low and the pride of the great men is humbled, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

2. (II. 12—22.)

For the Lord of Hosts holds a judgment day on all that is proud and high, and over all that is exalted that it may bow down, and over all the high and exalted cedars of Lebanon, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the exalted hills, and upon every prominent tower, and upon every fortified wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasure towns, so that man's pride falls, and the proud people bows itself, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day. But the idols they shall utterly give up, and they shall crowd into caves of the rocks and into holes in the dust, fleeing before the terror of Jehovah, and the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. On that day shall a man cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to go into the caves of the rocks and into the fissures of the cliffs,

* For מקדם read מקסם.

fleeing before the terror of Jehovah, and before the glory of His Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. O cease ye from man, in whose nostril is a breath, for what is he to be accounted of?

3. (III. 1—7.)

For behold the Lord of Hosts removes out of Jerusalem and out of Judah stay and staff, all stay of bread and stay of water; hero and warrior, judge and prophet, soothsayer and elder, captain of fifty, and noble, and counsellor, and wizard, and sorcerer. And I make children their rulers, and lads rule over them. Then the people shall jostle; man against man, and neighbour against neighbour shall they rage. The youth against the old man, and the contemptible against the honoured; when one takes hold of another in his father's house, *saying*, "Thou hast a garment, thou shalt be a head to us, and let this ruin be under thy hand!" he will reply on that day, I will be no binder-up, for there is no bread and no garment in my house; ye must not make me a head of the people.

4. (III. 8—15.)

For Jerusalem stumbles and Judah falls, because their tongue and their deeds are against Jehovah to provoke the eyes of His Majesty.

The callousness* of their face testified against them, and they shewed their sin like Sodom unconcealed. Woe to their soul, for they wrought evil to themselves. Say to the righteous that it is well with him, for they shall enjoy the fruit of their hands. Woe! it is ill with the wicked, for the work of his hands shall be recompensed to him. The rulers of my people are a child

* The word here rendered callousness הכרת is taken by Ewald in a sense similar to the marginal reading in Job xix. 3. The Prophet is rebuking their shameless impudence.

and women rule over them. My people, thy leaders are misleaders, and have destroyed the way of thy paths. Then stands up Jehovah to strive, and comes forth to judge nations. Jehovah shall come to judgment with the elders and princes of His people. And ye have fed on the vineyard, spoil from the poor is in your hands. What right have you to trample on my people, and to grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord God of Hosts.

5. (III. 16, IV. 1.)

And Jehovah said, Because the daughters of Zion have become proud and go with outstretched neck, and wantoning with their eyes, mincingly they go, and tinkle with their anklets; the Lord makes scabby the crown of the daughters, and shall make bare their shame. On that day will the Lord remove the ornaments of their anklets, and their little suns and moons, and earrings, and necklaces, and fine vails, the wreaths and the bracelets, and the girdles, and the smelling-bottles, and the amulets, and the finger and nose rings, the festal dresses, and the show dresses, and the handkerchiefs, the vails and the chemises, and the neck-bands, and the large vails.

And then, instead of scent, shall be putridity, and, in place of the bodice, a cord round the body, and instead of well-set hair baldness, and, instead of a mantle, a wrapper of sackcloth, and a brand instead of beauty! Thy men shall fall by the sword and thy mighty men in war: her gates shall lament and mourn, and she, stripped, shall sit on the ground. Seven women on that day shall lay hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let thy name be called upon us, take away our reproach!

6. (IV. 2—6.)

On that day shall the branch of Jehovah become grace and honour, and the fruit of the land a pride and ornament for the

residue of Israel. And then he who shall survive in Zion and be left in Jerusalem shall be called holy; every one of those registered for life in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion and Jerusalem from her midst through a spirit of judgment and through a spirit of fire. For Jehovah settles over the whole extent of Mount Zion, and over its solemn assembly, in a cloud and smoke by day, and the appearance of flaming fire by night; for over every height is a canopy, and it shall be a tabernacle for a shadow by day from the heat, and a refuge and a shelter from storm and from rain.

This discourse is a grand specimen of the impetuous oratory of Isaiah. No speech could begin more calmly, and shew at its commencement less sign of the storm with which it concludes.

The Prophet comes before a popular assembly, probably on a Sabbath-day; he has in his hand the book of the prophecies of Joel, at that time doubtless highly treasured: he reads out to the inhabitants of Jerusalem an attractive flattering portion, intending to expound this. But just as he is beginning, hardly has he looked over the Israel standing before him, that people which should be God's people, when he can see nothing before him but a mass of conjurors, of gold and silver, of war-horses, of idols; the mouth which would speak of Messiah's salvation is choked, and turning towards God his face and his address, he can only in deep sobs complain over this people rejected, as it must be, by Him. But just then a vision of the coming destruction comes before him, and he calls out to the people to hide them in the dust before the Majesty coming to punish.

Isaiah has now carried the people with him to the point he

wished: they are astonished, they tremble, but only the more calmly can he now begin to explain what he has to say.

For, a day the Lord has over all that is high and proud on the earth that it may be brought low; and, if the storm of God coming in the tempest and earthquake to judgment dashes to the ground in its passage all the giant trees of Lebanon and Bashan, mountains and hills, towers and high forts, and destroys the noble ships bound for Tarshish, and the high pleasure towers, how can frail diminutive man think to continue in his pride! The idols they shall leave to their fate, when they run to hide themselves; their worshippers, fleeing before their Judge coming in the earthquake, wish to take with them these images, but are soon glad to throw them away into some corner, where the moles and the bats will nestle about them. When one sees how easily even the proudest man perishes, how his life hangs on a mere breath, over which he himself has no power, how should one trust in him! (v. 22.)

(3) Not without a purpose, at the close of the former strophe, has he warned against trusting in mortal man; for those on whom the people trust, who form, so to speak, the staff of bread and water for the country, the pillars of the state shall be carried captive; and then shall come the most fearful disorder from continual strife, and only the rashest and most reckless shall come into power: in vain shall a well-meaning man beg in private a man with some means and character to bind up this falling house. (Cf. Job xxxiv. 17.)

(4) The Prophet in the fourth strophe begins by rebuking the shamelessness of the people, their open defiance of God; he contrasts, as with a sigh, with their conduct, God's eternal rule, that "it is well for the good, evil for the wicked," and announces (vv. 13, 14)

that He is ready to contend with the rulers of His people, to call them to account for trampling down His vineyard, and grinding the face of the poor begging for help.

(5) He turns in this strophe to the women. Their luxurious pride must be punished by corresponding disgrace, when they, losing their husbands in war, shall sink to the deepest misery, or even be violated by the coarse conquerors. From the scarcity of the men through war, the women shall be left without husbands. After a full description of the ornaments of the women he continues, instead of the scent which they now carry with them, there will be a smell of corruption from the many corpses; instead of the fair girdle a rope round the body to lead them away as slaves, baldness for the embroidered hair, sackcloth about the body in place of the wide mantle—both marks of mourning for the dead; finally a brand such as is stamped on slaves.

(6) For only thus, the last strophe briefly concludes, only when God shall have washed away the moral filth of these ill-adorned women, and removed the blood of the innocently murdered, which cleaves to the great men of Jerusalem (iii. 14, 15,) with the fire of judgment; then only shall the wished-for happy time come, of which that old prophet spake. Then will God's blessing rest on His land, but this shall be only for the *remnant* of Israel; on them and on their land the visible token of God's favour shall rest, as over the camp of Israel in the wilderness.

Self-condemnation. (v. 1—24.)

Thus far has God shewn Himself as a severe judge pronouncing sentence, and only briefly alluded to the charge against His people;

but now He is about to lay aside His majesty to speak as a simple countryman, and ask for the judgment of the people on his case. He represents Himself as the Prophet's uncle—for in a fable nothing must be left vague.

The Prophet having in verse (7) given the application, proceeds to instance the several forms of sin for which God's judgment should overtake them. (1) Their injustice and covetousness, (2) their luxury and gluttony, (3) their hardness of heart against the Good and the True.

As the catalogue of sins swells, as the Prophet proceeds, each of the three last strophes becomes longer than that before it; they consist respectively of 4, 6, and 7 verses.

The verse inserted here after verse 10 has been moved here from its present place after v. 17, where it seems quite out of place.

Ch. v. 1—7.

Let me now sing of my uncle, as my uncle sings of his vineyard:

My uncle had a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill,
And he fenced it and cleared it,
And planted it with choicest vines,
And built a tower in its midst;
He dug out also a winepress in it,
And waited that it should bring forth grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge I pray you between me and my vineyard, what is to be done more for my vineyard and I have not done it? wherefore waited I that it should bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes?—

Let me shew you then what I will do to my vineyard; remove its hedge, that it may be eaten up, break down its wall that it be trodden down, and I will make an end of it that it be not pruned nor digged, but grow up in thorns and thistles, and I will command the clouds not to pour any rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His favourite plant, and He waited for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

1. (v. 8—10, 17.)

Woe on those who join house to house, who lay field to field till there is no place left; and ye must live alone in the midst of the land! In my ears whispers the Lord of Hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, great and fair houses, without inhabitant; for ten acres of vineyard shall yield (but) one bath, and the seed of an homer yield but an ephah. And lambs shall then feed as one drives them, and the ruins of the fat ones kids* shall browse upon.

2. (v. 11—16.)

Woe to those who early in the morning pursue strong drink, who late into the evening are heated with wine, so that the lyre and harp, tabor and pipe, make their banquet, without considering Jehovah's work, never seeing His operation! Therefore my people are wandering away, though they know it not, while its nobles are exhausted† with hunger, its multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell enlargeth her desire and opens her mouth without measure, so that her pomp and multitude, and her noise and pleasure go down into it. Then the man sinks down and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty bow themselves,

* In ver. 17, for גרים read with the LXX. גדים.

† In ver. 13, for מתי רעב read מזי רעב as in Deut. xxxii. 24.

and then shall the Lord of Hosts be exalted in judgment, and the holy God shewn holy through judgment.

3. (v. 18—24.)

Woe to those who draw down guilt with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with cart-ropes: who say, Let His work hasten, let it fly that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come that we may know it. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who take darkness for light and light for darkness, who take bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to them who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight! Woe to those who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, who justify the unjust for reward, and rob the righteous of their right. Therefore as the flame devoureth the stubble, and burning hay collapses, their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom go up as dust; for that they scorned the instruction of the Lord of hosts and rejected the Word of the Holy One of Israel.

The Prophet having appealed to the people as judges between the vineyard and its owner, when by their silence they had admitted that he had done all he could, proceeds to tell what he will do to his vineyard. In the first part of his remarks he might be supposed to be still speaking of the literal vineyard, but when he proceeds to add, 'I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it,' the figurative meaning of the parable becomes at once clear. The pungency of the application was doubtless increased by the play of words with which v. 7. concludes.

The Prophet then, in the three following strophes, sets forth the offences of the people. The first, and the ground of all the

others, is injustice, the forsaking the eternal measure of right springing from self-love and covetousness. Through wrongful means they try to absorb all the houses and lands of the country—fools, who act as if they would at last dwell alone in the wide vacant land. But the Prophet hears distinctly the voice of the Lord of hosts sounding in his ears, telling him that as the fitting punishment the many fair houses, on whose possession they risk their soul, will stand empty, in consequence of the great barrenness of the land, set before us so vividly in v. 10; so that at length in the homes of those revellers a waste heap of ruin shall appear, on which sheep shall be driven by shepherds at their will. The full force, however, of the Prophet's abhorrence of these men's *latifundia* can only be appreciated by those who have entered into the idea of the Mosaic legislation concerning family allotments.

(2) While they are thus feasting in forgetfulness of God, He is silently carrying out His plans. Their appropriate punishment is that as they live without thought of a judgment day, the overthrow of the kingdom, and the carrying away chiefly of the principal sort, shall surprise them unexpectedly, they shall fall into the bitterest distress, or rather hell shall open her mouth to receive their wild revelry, as it swallowed up Korah and his company: a fearful punishment, but necessary, whereby the pride of man shall be again bowed down, and Jehovah clearly discerned in His true greatness and holiness (v. 15); (the language here being strikingly like that in Chapter ii.).

(3) A third great offence consists in the stubbornness against the Good and True when it is brought near to them through the true prophets of God. When these speak, as in v. 12, of the counsel

and work of God, they call out in defiance and derision, "Let it come soon that we may see it!" This is with the cords of vanity —of their vain fancy, effectually, as if with the strongest ropes to bring guilt and sin upon themselves. Such scoffings form the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost (Ch. xxii. 14). And, in truth, this sin is only the final issue of others which had grown so strong; they who are so hardened, are the lightminded revellers of the second strophe, and the unjust dealers of the first. But because this deliberate derisive contempt of the plain divine word is a self-slaughter of their own innermost life, the corresponding punishment can only be, that as before the flaming fire stubble and hay shrink up, so their root and blossom shall be quickly seized by the fire of the divine judgment, the root inwardly destroyed as by rottenness, the blossom flying away like dust and ashes. This sentence plainly forms the conclusion of a large section of the prophecy.

Further outlook over time and place, including Samaria.
(v. 25, IX. 8—x. 4.)

The discourse now rises to a more free historical outlook into the past and the future, and extends also further in space so as to include the sister kingdom. The poet teaches, that already many great misfortunes had come, as blows dealt by the divine wrath for the many offences of the people. Samaria, for example, has been chastened in a variety of ways; but all these blows have not sufficed, the measure of offences is still increasing; therefore also the chastising hand of God is still stretched out to smite again, till at length the last fatal blow shall arrive, the invasion namely

of the Assyrians. After a short introduction we have, accordingly, a series of four short strophes, of which each begins with mention of one of the many great offences, and goes on to the punishment; but all with one voice conclude with the ever-recurring refrain, that the punishment is not yet concluded. After the attention has thus continually been turned towards it, it is at length announced (v. 26—30). The first three strophes, touching on Samaria's history, form a kind of whole in themselves, and thus have become torn from what seems to be their proper context.

1. (v. 25, IX. 8—12.)

Therefore was Jehovah's wrath kindled against His people, and He stretched out His hand against it, and smote it, so that the mountains trembled, and their corpses lay like offscourings in the midst of the streets.

For all this His wrath is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. The Lord sent a word upon Jacob, and it lighted upon Israel, that the whole people may feel it, even Ephraim and the dweller of Samaria, saying in their pride and haughtiness, The bricks are fallen down, let us build it with hewn stones; the mulberry-trees are cut down, but let us make cedars grow in their place.

Jehovah then strengthened the princes* of Rezin against it, and He arms His enemies, Syria before and the Philistines behind; they eat up Israel with full mouth.

For all this His wrath is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.

2. (IX. 13—17.)

And the people turned not to Him who had smitten it, and

* ix. 10, for צרי read שרי, with many MSS. Ch. vii. 6. Tabel the name of one of these princes is given.

sought not the Lord of Hosts; so Jehovah destroyed out of Israel head and tail, palm tree and rush on one day;* and the leaders of this people became misleaders, and He destroyed those led. Therefore the Lord rejoices not in the youth, and has no compassion on their orphans and widows, for every one is unholy, and from an evil one, and every mouth speaketh godlessness.

For all this His wrath is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.

[The Ancient and Honourable is the head, and the Prophet teaching falsehood is the tail.]

3. (IX. 18—21.)

For injustice has burnt like fire, consuming thorns and thistles, and kindling the thickets of the wood, that they roll up in pillars of smoke. Through the fury of the Lord of Hosts the land is heated through, and the people become like food for the fire; they spare not one the other, and one ate to the right and hungered, and devoured to the left and was satisfied not, they eat each one the flesh of his own arms; Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, and they together are against Judah.

For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.

4. (X. 1—4.)

Woe to them who decree vain decrees, and keep publishing wrong, to oppress the weaker in judgment, and to rob of their right the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may plunder the fatherless! But what will ye do on the day of visitation, and when the overthrow comes from far, to whom will ye flee for help, and where hide your glory? He

* ix. 14 is an evident gloss.

but crouched down as a prisoner, and they fall as men to be slain.

For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.

Ch. v. 26—30.

So then lifts He up an ensign to the nations from far, and hisses for them from the end of the earth: and see, he comes quickly: none is weary and none stumbling among them; none slumber or sleep; never is the girdle of his loins loosed, never his shoe-thong broken: he whose arrows are sharpened, and all his bows bent: his horses' hoofs are counted as flint, and his chariot-wheels like the whirlwind; he has a voice like the lioness, he roars like young lions, and rages and takes hold of the prey and carries it away safe, with none to deliver. And (when) in that day it storms against him like a storm at sea, he looks to the land and there is thick darkness, and the light is become dark in its gloom.

Ver. 25 forms the transition to the following verses. Once, we must understand, in the life-time of that generation Jehovah had shewn Himself in wrath, and it was a blow under which the mountains trembled, and many men became corpses in a moment, about whom none took thought—but that was only a first blow. He threatens to strike yet further. The calamity referred to was probably the earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, mentioned Amos i. 1, Zech. xiv. 5.

(1) A threatening word, namely the above refrain, has God sent down from heaven to the people like a heavy burden falling on them (Zech. ix. 1), that the whole people may know and feel it, but specially the Northern kingdom, for the foolish pride of that kingdom which had already become tributary to the Assyrians in

the north, but thought, through injustice and marauding inroads, to become stronger than it had yet been. God therefore, as a punishment for this, armed against him all his lesser foes, so that the Syrians in the north-east, the Philistines in the south-west, fell upon his territory for plunder.

(2) A second offence of the Northern kingdom was its hardness of heart: after the heavy blows they had received they did not discern from whom the blows came; so a worse defeat befel them, wherein the people were led astray by their rulers, in that they sought not their true Leader.

(3) As a third offence of this kingdom is named injustice, which, laying hold of and destroying everything like burning fire, brings its own punishment. It seemed as if the wrath of God had burnt quite through the land, so that it could not shake off all the horrors of anarchy: the spirit of lawlessness once let loose is as ravening hunger which is never quiet (compare Zech. xii. 6); one tribe from the same mother fights against the other, or else both unite against Judah. Still no peace: a last punishment must follow!

(4) In speaking of the injustice of Samaria the application was easy to Jerusalem, where the Prophet had charged its inhabitants with the same sin: the mention of Judah too, at the end of the strophe, made a natural transition for the Prophet, who was now to address Judah. In such sudden turns of thought Isaiah is a master. He had no past calamities to recur to, as in addressing Samaria (excepting the calamity referred to in v. 25), so he calls on them to present the future before their minds: to what fortress would they flee, and where leave in security their wealth and grandeur gotten by wrong! there was nothing before them but that their great

ones, like the meanest captives, should crouch in chains, or in the midst of others destined for slaughter fall dead like them, under (that is) the hands of the Assyrians, who are described just after. This canto, like the others, prepares with the same refrain for what is to follow.

(v. 26—30.) Barbarians are to come from far to be Jehovah's instruments of punishment, specially the Assyrian. He has only to rouse a beacon-light on the high mountains; or, according to another figure drawn from the collecting of bees, he has but to hiss to them, to bring quickly into their land swarms of the remotest nations: and how surprisingly quick and unchecked is their march (v. 27), how perfect their armour as one sees them come nearer (v. 28); how irresistible their fearful onslaught in battle (v. 29)! But not only rages the fearful war-cry; what is far worse, and shews the divine interposition against them, it thunders in the heaven on him who looks upwards for help, like the roaring of the sea: above or below there is no help or comfort; and when one again turns the eye towards the earth, the light is darkened in thick gloom.

BOOK II.

THE SECOND WORK OF ISAIAH.

Ch. VI., VII., VIII.—IX.—6. XVII. 1—11.

AS the first writing of Isaiah falls at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz (B.C. 740), so this second, to all appearance, at the commencement of Hezekiah's reign (B.C. 724). The Prophet, in the sixteen years' interval, had passed through his own hardest trials, and had likewise seen the power of Judah fallen low.

When the accession of the new king gave ground for better hopes, he seems to have felt moved to work through writing for a larger circle, and to gather up the recollections of its most noteworthy events. He had worked for thirty-three years under three very different kings: the many events of his prophetic experience thronged upon him; and the empire was now entering on a new period, which, as respected the king, gave ground for better hope, but in consequence of the mistakes and misgovernment of the past, and the growing power of Assyria, was gloomy in prospect. But, various as had been the destiny of the kingdom and of his own in these thirty-three years, when he looked back upon it and recalled with what inspired thoughts and forebodings he had worked from

the first, he found nothing that he had witnessed in his own and the kingdom's experience which had not been seen in vision in the first moments of the stirring of his prophetic spirit: it had then come before him as of divine appointment. He resolved then, on all these grounds, in a prophetic review of his past life, to relate the sins of the kingdom, whose consequences were now appearing, and, at the same time to set forth his own eternal hope: both, as in most living forms they had come before his spirit at the commencement, and later, amid all the changing circumstances, had become ever clearer and more certain. The whole plan and execution of this section differs from the former section. Its framework is historical; and, though long addresses are inserted in the picture, it is essentially a narrative, from which it starts and which breaks in again on each fitting occasion. Portions of another kind might be added as appendices, but do not form the main structure. This fell plainly into three divisions: (1) the splendid introduction in the narrative of the Prophet's call (c. vi.); (2) the further narrative of his prophetic working (c. vii.—ix. 6); (3) fragments more loosely joined on, of which xvii. 1—11 at least has been preserved.

We cannot now say what commencement this third part had originally: the second has not come down to us entire, as more careful investigation shews. Since its parts must originally have been closely connected, this loss of a part is more easy to recognize. From viii. 16 we see that the Prophet made use of the help of disciples; he had for some time gathered about him a circle of closer friends and disciples. We thus see more clearly how the first and the third person might both be used of Isaiah in the following three chapters.

Isaiah's Consecration.

There is no doubt that the Prophet actually felt such an ennobling moment as is here described, in which he became as conscious of the majesty of Jehovah as of his own call; a moment from which dated a force which lasted on in him unchanged and unweakened, and impelled him to all which he afterwards undertook: it is quite natural to suppose that at that moment his long future life would be crowded into one concentrated picture. The uncommon difficulties which lay before him, but before which he shrunk not back, would come before him; even as Christ, we are told, from the beginning of His ministry knew all that should come upon Him.

Among all the feelings which at that time streamed upon him, that which he recalled most vividly, for its complete accordance with his present depressed frame of mind, was that of the fruitlessness of his work. What he had then foreseen was now, through the completeness of its fulfilment, marked out to him as a revelation of God's Providence. It comes before him that, He it was, before whom all the future is clearly marked out, who from that moment had marked him out to be a prophet of misfortune. Here then he sketches in this introduction the pictures of the Infinite Majesty which he had once seen: for no one can be a prophet who has not once seen the divine Majesty in such sort, that he can never again lose its image. Clear as was the sense of his divine commission which followed, it was equally clear to him that it would be for the most part fruitless; he was to commence work with, as it were, a curse resting on his labours: the only hope, it seemed to him, was for a remnant, after a complete laying waste of the established regime

and after the sharpest trials. Thus this introduction intimates to us what will be the general complexion of the writing.

Ch. VI. 1—10.

In the year of king Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted, His train filling the temple. Seraphs stood high around Him; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly: and one cried to the other and said,

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts;
The fulness of the whole earth is His majesty.

Then the threshold of the door shook before the voice calling, and the house fills with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. But there flew to me one of the Seraphs, having a fragment of stone which he had taken from the altar, and touched my mouth, and said, See, this has touched thy lips, and thus shall thy guilt depart and thy sins be pardoned. Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? And I said, Here am I, send me!

Then said He, Go, so that thou sayest to this people,

Hear continually, and understand not;
See continually, and discern not.

Make this people's heart gross, and its ears dull, and its eyes closed, so that it neither see with its eyes, nor hear with its ears, nor its heart understand, and it turn that it may be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And He said, Till the cities are waste without inhabitant, and the houses without men, and the ground be wasted to a desert, and Jehovah removes far away the men, and great is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

And if there be a tenth in it, that must again be for the fire: like to the terebinth and like to the oak, in which at their fall a stump remains, so is the holy seed—its stump.

We have first portrayed the open gaze into the true Majesty and Holiness which must go before all prophetic destination. The picture of Jehovah on His throne is taken from a ruler, who in a solemn assembly of his estates, surrounded and done reverence to by the great men of his kingdom, sits enthroned, as if to come to an important decision on the necessities of the kingdom. For the mission of a prophet is an important event in the divine government, and deliberation in heaven may well be represented as preceding it. As, however, it was against the old religious feeling, grounded on the Mosaic teaching, to picture the Highest, He Himself is not here shewn, only His outward and lower surroundings: what, as it were, descends to the sphere of vision is more particularly described. Only in the description of the seraphs, and in the terms of their greeting of the Lord on His appearance, and in their song of praise and its effects, is the Majesty of God portrayed. The seraphs, like the priests in the Temple, sing antiphonally His praise; praise of His inner as well as of His outward Majesty.

When these have in their song of praise made Him the offering which is most acceptable to Him, there comes from the Throne a cry so mighty, that the threshold where the Prophet stands listening in the distance is shaken by the mighty voice. The song of the seraphs is the greeting of homage, with which the highest servants of the king approach their Lord. But they can wish Him nothing as if He were an earthly king, for He has all. Only rightly to know Him and praise Him, is the right homage, for those at least who

know Him as His nearest servants know Him. But the right knowledge of Him consists in discerning not only His infinite Holiness, as the inner characteristic of His being, but also of His, as infinite, Majesty of Revelation in the outer World: His Majesty itself is the fulness of the World, and there is nothing therein, wherein that is not revealed. The song of the seraphs consists of two clauses, which they sing in response like the priests in the Temple. We must not think it was this song which thrilled through the threshold—that was to thrill through not thresholds but hearts, like that of Isaiah. Only one loud cry has power to sound above this and thrill through all, and that is the voice of God Himself: further, had the seraphs' voice been intended we should have had the plural, not the singular, in v. 4. That the voice was an answer of acceptance, is shewn by the House (*i. e.* the Inner Temple) filling with smoke, as by the accepted savour of this offering (Rev. viii. 4).

The image of a king on his throne in solemn session is mingled with images from the Temple service. Every word is here singularly appropriate, not one superfluous: the wings of the seraphs even are only mentioned in reference to the incident in v. 5.

The sense of the danger of the vision of the Divine Holiness and Majesty is founded on a right feeling: but while the Prophet fears to have committed an offence, there flies a seraph to purify his yet unprophetic lips, as it were with a hot stone from that altar, on which the purest offerings, those simple words of the seraphs, are burning, the fire of which purifies human lips and sanctifies them into seraphs' lips. So that now, when the cry from the Throne sounds, Who will undertake the divine mission? it sounds friendly and sympathising to Isaiah, as though he belonged already to that

circle, and clearly understood its language. Then, become strong and of good courage in the Lord, he offers himself for a Prophet.

"Go to this people," says God, not "to my people:" but tells him that the result of his mission will be but to harden the people; for where his mission generally fails of its intended purpose, one may say, hardly and mysterious but yet truly, the Prophet brings, instead of conversion and salvation, hardening and ruin. But, in truth, this sad result cannot be thought of as eternal. Hence Isaiah ventures to ask, Lord, how long must this perverseness continue? The truth is then plainly revealed to him, that an entire abolition of the existing state, a succession of fiery trials which shall spare nothing, must first extirpate all that was outward, leaving nothing but the mysterious hidden root, that shall remain ineradicable, like the deeply-rooted stump of the terebinth and oak, which continually puts forth new shoots (cf. Job xiv. 7—9). But the emphasis here is on the word *holy*, in v. 13. This *holy seed* is the remnant of whom Isaiah so often speaks. Hence in the words of this verse are condensed into a figure, both the terrible seriousness and the enduring hope of those times; all the apprehensions and at the same time all the joyful anticipations of the Prophet.

The Main Body of the Work.

At the head stood in all probability a narrative, the tenor of which we may infer from the words, viii. 18. We see from it that the Prophet's name had become a matter of prophetic import. Whether he received the name of Isaiah (the Salvation of God) from his parents, or received it later as Prophet, in any case it might set forth the prophetic truth, that eternal salvation is to be

sought only in Jehovah, but in Him is certain: and as we shall soon see that everything in his family history received a spiritual import in the light of his divine visions and hopes, so it was especially with his own name. In the prophetic ecstacy, it must once have seemed to him that God called to him; that, as he had been called the Salvation of God, so surely is there only in the true God salvation, and that of this truth his very name should be a sign. As to the special circumstances in which the meaning of his name was first brought home to him by God, we are left in the dark; probably it was originally told in immediate connection with chapter vi.

(2) It appears pretty certain on like grounds, that a chapter should follow, in which should be told, under what divine impulse Isaiah was led to call his first-born son Shear Jashub (*A remnant shall return*). The sad truth involved in this had been expressed already in its essentials by Joel, Amos, and Hosea, but it had impressed itself on Isaiah from his first calling, and when he received his first son he felt impelled by the divine Spirit thus to name him as a pledge of a future better Israel, so that he as he grew up might be a living witness and sign of it. He alludes later on every opportunity to the comfort conveyed in that short name, as in vii. 3. That the narrative of the naming was very short, it would be unsafe to infer from the fact, that the history of the naming of his second son was so; for the brevity here might be in consequence of the greater fulness before.

If the birth of the first-born son fell in Jotham's reign, the account would make a link between his calling in Uzziah's reign and the event described in Ahaz' reign (vii. 1—17).

(3) We here learn that the hostility of the two kingdoms of Israel and Syria against Judah, which had in Jotham's reign expressed itself only in marauding inroads, was now sealed by a regular treaty; they carried their plans so far as to choose a king, Ben Tabeel (vii. 16), probably one of the Syrian princes. The king and his nobles were in consternation at the tidings of the advance of the combined armies, they called to the king of Assyria for help; king Ahaz submitted himself in the most abject manner, and sent large presents to procure his assistance. This was, in fact, effectually rendered; Damascus was overthrown, and Samaria made tributary.

The alarm of Ahaz would be much increased by the disaffection which, we learn from chap. viii. 6, 12, was general among his subjects. There was a party in favour of the confederated kings: another element of evil omen was the trust in false prophets and dealers with spirits (viii. 19). Isaiah alone with his closer friends remained calm and collected, pointing out everywhere and against everyone the divine view of politics, even when they would not understand him, ceasing not to set forth in the most varied manner the same elementary truths.

Ch. VII. 1—9.

The Prophet came before the king to say what, in the first moment of his surprise and dejection, was all important. He bade him rest in quiet and confidence in Jehovah, and assured him that the danger which threatened him would pass over. His address is of unmixed encouragement, except that at the end he adds a word of warning against unbelief.

Ch. VII. 1—9.

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up against Jerusalem to war against it, but could not take it. Then it was told the house of David, Syria is encamping in Ephraim, and his heart and his people's were shaken, as trees of the wood shake before the wind. But Jehovah said to Isaiah, Go out to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the road to the fuller's field; and say to him, Take heed and be quiet; fear not, and let not thy heart tremble before these two ends of smoking firebrands, because the wrath of Rezin and Syria and of the son of Remaliah burns.

Because Syria thinks evil against thee, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, saying, Let us go against Judah, and besiege it, and conquer it for us: thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass: for Syria's head is Damascus, and Damascus' head Rezin, [and within sixty-five years is Samaria broken—a people no longer]. And Ephraim's head Samaria, and Samaria's head the son of Remaliah, *but Judah's head is Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's head is Jehovah.* Believe ye not; then continue ye not.

The words in v. 8 put in brackets are plainly an interpolation, they are inconsistent with the pregnant brevity of the discourse, and the long period of sixty-five years here assigned is opposed to the speedy downfall of the two kings predicted in v. 16. The words, however, have a genuine old Hebrew and prophetic complexion. Sixty-five years means something less than a man's lifetime, like the seventy years foretold by Jeremiah. The best

hypothesis is, that the words have come down from a more ancient oracle of some prophet, and from the similarity of the thought were placed by some ancient reader at the margin. On the other hand, we have every ground for assuming that in the middle of v. 9 words of the purport of the words in italics must have dropped out. As the text stands, the meaning must be that the two kingdoms should fail of making Jerusalem the capital of Ephraim; Samaria should still be the capital. But this would be but a feeble and obscure way of expressing the failure of the attempt on Jerusalem.

The remark in v. 1, that the kings failed in carrying out their design, is here inserted in a parenthesis, and seems to have been added to shew how Isaiah's prediction was fulfilled. The particular direction given to the Prophet how he should find the king, shews plainly that Ahaz was reluctant to appear in public, but had now, moved by blind fear, gone to this weakest side of the city to inspect the walls and take other precautions against a siege. That Isaiah is stated to have taken his son with him, was plainly because he was to serve as a visible sign that in the future at least a sure hope remained for Israel.

The Prophet adds, as a ground of assurance, that the enemy was burning indeed with wrath, but not like a fresh brand long to burn and consume, but only like two ends of burnt-out smoking brands. Those kings count on each keeping his own capital, and shall Judah not have Jerusalem for its capital, Jehovah for its King! But, that this may happen as God wills it, there must be on the part of those now threatened in Jerusalem, faith, firm confidence in Jehovah, and belief in His word: and woe, if no firm faith were

here! assuredly there would be also no firm standing, no delivery. In the original there is a play on thought and word.

Ch. VII. 10—17.

When Ahaz makes no reply, but is still unbelieving, the Prophet declares his readiness, in the strength of God, to work for him any sign he might ask.

The Prophet, who knew how he was led by the false prophets and necromancers (Ch. viii. 19), is ready to set his wonder-working powers against theirs. He felt much hurt by Ahaz' careless refusal, though he adds that their thus trying man's patience was a light matter compared with the way they tried God's.

The Lord Himself should then give them a sign; but the sign, through the disbelief and ungodliness of Ahaz and his people, should be very different from what it should have been. The Messiah, Emmanuel, was shortly to be born—that was clear to the Prophet's mind; but not until he arrived at riper years should the blessings of his reign begin for the remnant that should be left. Until he arrived at that age, he should share in the consequences of the land's desolation with his countrymen: the result foretold generally, v. 22, is applied particularly to him in v. 15.

But while the Prophet foresees and predicts the desolation to be wrought by the Assyrians, he foresees that the present attempt of Syria and Ephraim shall fail; for the sufferings and final triumph of Emmanuel could not come to pass if this attempt should be successful. Who is intended by the Virgin that is to conceive is here left unexplained: the article before the noun denotes simply one of the class, a young woman of marriageable age, yet a virgin.

Ch. VII. 10—17.

And Jehovah spake further to Ahaz, thus: Ask thee a sign from Jehovah thy God, going deep down to hell, or high up to heaven. But Ahaz said, I may not ask nor tempt Jehovah. Then he said, Hear now, ye of the house of David; Is it too little for you to weary men, that ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and call his name Emmanuel. Cream and honey shall he eat, when he knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, that land shall be laid waste of whose two kings thou hast a horror. Jehovah shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days which have not come since Ephraim fell away from Judah—the king of Assyria.

Ch. VII. 18—25.

We must not suppose that the conclusion of Chapter vii., the more complete unfolding of the prophecy, was spoken to the careless and unbelieving king. We must conclude therefore that between v. 17 and v. 18 much has dropped out. It must here have been told how Isaiah left the king, and probably how he then returned quietly with his child to his house, and began there, in the circle of those who better understood him, to unfold the meaning of what he had so briefly addressed to Ahaz. It is likely there was here a more full account of the coming and nature of Emmanuel, for the reference to Him in chapter viii. (8—10) seems to suppose something more known of him than the half-mysterious announcement in vii. 14. Probably too there was some account of the mother who in Bethlehem was to give birth to Messiah referred

to in Micah v. 1—2. For the way it is spoken of there seems to imply the existence of an older prophecy, which was likely to have come from Isaiah.

Ch. VII. 18—25.

For on that day shall Jehovah hiss for the flies which are on the further rivers of Egypt, and the bees which are in the land of Assyria: they come and settle all of them in the vallies of the mountain-walls, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all enclosures of thorns, and in all pastures. On that day shall the Lord shave with the razor of those hired beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, he shall shave off the head and the hair of the feet, and also take away the beard. And on that day shall one man keep a cow and two sheep; and because they give him much milk he shall drink cream: for cream and milk shall every one take of those left in the midst of the land. And on that day shall every place where are a thousand vines for a thousand silver pieces, be the portion of thorns and thistles. With arrows and bows shall they come thither: and all the hills which are tilled with the mattock, thither shall not come the fear of thorns and thistles; but it shall be an open common for cattle, and a place for the treading down of sheep.

We have here a full exposition of the enigmatical expression in vii. 15, and of the causes which produced the state of the country there alluded to.

All the most noxious, poisonous, and tormenting creatures; the flies, or rather gad-flies, the emblem of Egypt which abounded in such creatures, the Egyptian soldiers that is from the extremest limits of the country, and the wasps of Assyria, the hosts of the two great mutually jealous empires, shall be summoned by Jehovah

as quickly and easily as a bee-master calls his bees by hissing, and they settle on it, as the swarms of flying insects, these gad-flies and wasps cover at certain times all moist and low parts of the country.

Then shall the whole country be laid waste, be as it were close shaved, as though God had hired the razor for that purpose from beyond the Euphrates; even as an earthly king hires foreign soldiers to use them as he will, namely the unsparing king of the Assyrians. When the land of Judah has been thus wholly laid waste, it must return to its natural wilderness state, full of thorns and thistles, in place of the present vineyards and cornfields. The few people which shall then be left in the land need only keep a few milch cattle, as in such a land the wild pasture is everywhere common; and the people in this wild state of the country have only cream and honey to live on, with some wild animals got for them with their bows and arrows from the wilderness (v. 24). There shall be no fear of thorns and thistles when there is no land under cultivation; and so the young Messiah, as one of the few survivors, shall share in the country's sad fate: He shall eat cream and honey till He grows up, and the wonderful sign shall be fulfilled in Him.

Other Signs. (VIII. 1—4.)

And Jehovah said to me, Take to thee a large tablet, and write thereon in popular characters belonging to *Hasty booty, speedy prey:* and I took for me as trusty witnesses, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah. And I came near to the Prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son. Then said Jehovah to me, Call his name *Hasty booty, speedy prey:* for before the child shall know how to cry My father, my mother,

the goods of Damascus and the booty of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria.

Isaiah was bidden to write the four words in popular characters, *i.e.* large and plain so that any one might read it, in distinction from book-writing which only learned men could read. The force of the preposition before the name seems to come under the idea of the genitive, as the tablet might be considered his whose name was written on it, (as in Ezekiel xxxvii. 16).

The words *and I came near* need not imply immediate succession in time, merely that the conception was about this time.

Conclusion of the Discourse. (VIII. 5—IX. 15.)

And Jehovah spake further to me as follows:

Because this people disdains the softly-flowing waters of Siloah, and follows with joy Rezin and the son of Remaliah, therefore will the Lord bring upon them the great and strong waters of Euphrates, the Assyrian king and all his glory: then rises he over all his bed, and passes over all his banks, and presses into Judah an overflowing and surging torrent, reaching up to the neck; and the outspreading of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, Emmanuel. Be enraged, ye people, and despair; and pay attention, all ye wide places of the earth: prepare yourselves and despair; take counsel, and it will be disappointed; speak a word, it shall not stand: for God is with us.

Then spake Jehovah also to me in the ecstasy, and warned me not to go in the way of this people: Ye shall not call sedition what this people calls sedition, not fear nor care for what it fears. The Lord of Hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; and let Him be the object of your fear, and be He your care. He will indeed be the sanctuary, but also the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence, for the two houses of Israel, for a trap and a snare

for the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken.

2. (VIII. 16—22.)

Bind up the oracle, seal the lesson by my disciples. So will I wait for Jehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and hope in Him.

Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah has given me are for signs and portents in Israel on the part of the Lord of Hosts who dwelleth on mount Zion.

And when they say to you, Turn ye to the spirits and to the soothsayers, who chirp and who mutter: turn not the people to their gods in place of the living to the dead? "To instruction and the oracle!" Yea, so also shall he say who has no morning light, who runs through, bowed down and hungry; yet, when he hungers and is furious, curses his king and God, and looks upwards. And he looks to the earth, but there is trouble and darkness, the gloomiest distress; and into darkness he is driven.

3. (IX. 1—7.)

Yet they cannot darken utterly the land which they oppress: even as the former time brought disgrace to Zebulon and Nepthali, the latter brings honour; towards the lake, beyond Jordan, towards the bound of the heathen. The people which sits in darkness sees a great light: those which dwell in the land of gloominess, light overstreams them. Thou multipliest the nation, increasest its joy; they joy before thee as men joy in harvest, as they rejoice in dividing the spoil. For thou breakest the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the staff of his taskmaster, as in the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping soldier and the garment rolled in blood, that shall be for burning, for fuel. For a child is born to us, a son is

given to us; and the government falls on his shoulder, and they call His name Wonderful, Counsellor, Hero, God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace: for the increase of the empire, and for boundless salvation, for the sake of David's throne, and for the sake of his empire, to sustain it and support it, through judgment and through justice, henceforth and for ever. The jealousy of the Lord of Hosts shall do this!

(1) The brook of Siloah flowing softly by Jerusalem is the type of the sovereignty of the ancient house of David, mild and soft, as compared with other larger kingdoms; as, conversely, the Nile with its monsters is the type of cruel Egypt, and the mighty Euphrates, with its frequent devastating floods, that of the rapidly extending empire of Assyria. Because then the populace in Jerusalem foolishly scorns the gentle home government, and has pleasure in the advance of the two confederate kings; Jehovah will, as a punishment, quickly bring the flood of the Euphrates over the land, so that the water shall reach to the neck, and escape be hopeless; namely, the king of Assyria with his whole fearfully superb army, whose wide outstretched wings cover the whole land, yea, Thy holy land, thou expected, longed-for Emmanuel!

But at the mention of this name, and at the thought it calls forth, the language springs up, as though violently agitated, to turn against all the heathen nations, including the last-named Assyrians, with the swoop of annihilating divine threatening. Rage all ye nations as ye will, it will but end in despair!

For the spirit of the Prophet has become calm and collected in the strength of Jehovah, and wholly severing himself from the present politics of the people, he has received for himself and his

friends the following divine warnings:—(1) Not at once to take as dangerous to the empire what the people calls *sedition;* and generally not to share in the lower fear from poverty of spirit and want of faith: but, (2) rather to count Jehovah alone holy, and to be feared. He will, in that quickly approaching time of sorest trials, be venerated by them, and be for His part a sanctuary and asylum for them: but even as on the base of an altar those fleeing in blind fear may likely stumble and fall, so will He be for the many a stone of stumbling. For the divine justice is something which either, if regarded, longed for, and attained to, becomes salvation; or, conversely, disregarded, rejected, or longed-for only in a wild vague sense, or in the pressure of distress, becomes eternal ruin.

(2) But enough of this: it is time to draw to a conclusion. The duty of good men has been sufficiently explained, and it seems to the Prophet as though he heard the divine voice urging him to close, to keep the divine warning and distinction just given rolled up and sealed, to serve in future, on its fulfilment, as a witness to the truth (cf. chap. xxx. 8). And the Prophet at least, in the threatening time of trouble, will hope in Jehovah: indeed he has pledges of the truth of the hopes and promises, for he and his children go about in their life and in their name living witnesses and portents of the brighter future and the eternal hopes. But from the false prophets, sorcerers, and misleaders of all sorts, even though the king and his courtiers bid you trust in them, is no salvation; trust not in such, in men who imitate the voices of spirits: for no marvel if such, inwardly dead and lost to the truth, turn themselves to dead gods instead of to the living; according to the eternal ordinance, that such as the man and the people, such are its gods: and on

that day how will those men, who now know nothing of the true oracle wish to turn back thither, when the gloomy fearful judgment-day takes from them all morning dawn and hope! But unhappily the wish is then too late: in heavy gloom and tortured by fury the man runs like mad through the land, curses, in the moment of worst torture and embitterment, that God and Lord whom he slavishly and yet fruitlessly served, and turns his glance upwards to the true God: but as he sees there no light, he looks to earth again, and sees there the most terrible darkness without a ray of light, and so is, as it were, hopelessly driven into the darkness there to perish.

(3) Yet no! far higher than all threatening dangers and distresses, present or future, is the certainty of the eternal Messianic salvation. Think not the darkness just spoken of will be total; the land may be oppressed, but not for ever darkened; rather shall even those parts of the kingdom of Ephraim already seized by the Assyrians—the northern and eastern parts—be again restored; and great as was their former disgrace through this Assyrian conquest, equally high shall be their future honour. The poor people, languishing in spiritual darkness and bodily distress, sees suddenly a great light, a wonderful deliverance: they joy over the breaking by God of the Assyrian yoke, in an overthrow of the Assyrians as fatal as that of the Midianites under Gideon. But at that time must every trace of wild war and fierceness be blotted out; every boot of the proudly trampling foreign soldier, every blood-stained garment be burnt: for the eternal peace must come, as the pledge of which a child is promised, who, when grown up, shall take the burden of government on his shoulders: for, instead of the short child's name

Emmanuel, He takes the new name, wherein is expressed the whole thought of His infinite greatness and majesty. *Wonderful—Counsellor* (literally, *wonder of a Counsellor*); *Hero God*, who, as an irresistible God, fights and conquers; *Eternal Father*, who cares for His subjects; Prince-of-Peace, who will have no war, and establishes peace for ever. As the kings of Judah were in the habit of taking new names at their accession, so the Prophet may have conceived Emmanuel would take such a name at His accession.

But this all tends to the establishing the true eternal divine kingdom with its salvation, a kingdom which the Prophet deemed might become one with that of David, if only this should raise itself by a strong effort: and since the true end of all Isaiah's working is the furthering of His eternal kingdom, the jealousy of the Lord of Hosts is certain to fulfil this, and His promise may be safely trusted.

Second Discourse on Samaria. (XVII. 1—11.)

As Isaiah concluded his first written word with a discourse on the Ten Tribes, so he might add to this a like chapter, which should serve for a comment on the prophecies of chapters vii. and viii. The section here inserted (xvii. 1—11) shews that at that time, not only the Assyrians had completed the conquest of the north-eastern part of the kingdom of Samaria (2 Kings xv. 19), but that the downfall of the Syrian kingdom of Damascus floated before his spiritual eye as near at hand. We know (2 Kings xvi. 9) that it was at the prayer of Ahaz, when hard pressed by the Syrians, that Tiglath Pileser overthrew that kingdom: but the Prophet might have much earlier foreseen the necessity of the overthrow

of Damascus, and in fact this discourse shews no trace of the invasion by Judah of the united Syrians and Ephraemites: the league between the powers was now of a defensive character (v. 3). Ephraim hoped in the strong fortress of Damascus to possess a bulwark against further assaults from the Assyrians. The hostility foretold (Ch. ix. 10, 11) was now at an end. But Isaiah foresaw that the approaching fall of Damascus would draw after it the ruin of the northern kingdom, in order that—(1) this vain confidence in Damascus as a bulwark; (2) the pride; (3) the idolatry, and (4) the false confidence on external supports generally might be rooted out: those four fundamental evils from which, in spite of its heavy misfortunes of late, that kingdom still suffered.

Thus this section falls into four strophes, of which the first alone bears directly on Damascus. The third is somewhat fragmentary at the end.

1. (XVII. 1—3.)

[Burden upon Damascus].

Behold, Damascus shall cease as a city, and become a place of falling ruins: forsaken are the cities of Aroer, the pasture of flocks; they come there with none to frighten them. Thus shall the bulwark be lost to Ephraim, and the kingdom to Damascus; and the residue of Syria shall be like the glory of the sons of Israel, saith the Lord of Hosts.

2. (XVII. 4—6.)

And then on that day shall the glory of Jacob be laid low, and his fulness of flesh reduced. And when the harvest time takes away the ears of corn, and the arm gathers the ears, he shall be like him who gleans ears in the valley of Rephaim, and

there remains left in it but a gleaning, as in the shaking of olive-trees, two or three of the fruit left at the top, four or five in the branches of the fruit-tree, saith the Lord of Hosts.

3. (XVII. 7—8.)

On that day shall the man look to his Maker, and his eyes have regard to the Holy One of Israel; and he shall not have respect to the altars, the work of his hands, and will not respect what his own fingers have made, with the groves and images.

4. (XVII. 9—11.)

On that day shall his fortified towns be like the desolation of bush and tree-top, which were laid waste before the children of Israel, and shall become a wilderness. Because thou forgettest the God of thy salvation, and thought not of the rock of thy strength, therefore mayest thou plant tender plants, and set there vines of the stranger: on the day thou plantest them thou nursest them, and in the morning bringest thy seed to the flower; but the harvest has disappeared on the day of sickness and incurable pain.

(1) Both the Capital and the lower towns of the Syrian kingdom shall be brought to ruin, and made into pasture-land. Among the towns Aroer seems specially mentioned, because it had belonged to Israel, but must, before this, have been taken from it by Syria. The result however is that in the destruction of Damascus, Ephraim loses its bulwark and Damascus its position as a capital, while the rest of the Syrian kingdom shall be as miserable as the miserable glory of the kingdom of Ephraim, that kingdom which in spite of its great losses behaved so proudly and domineeringly (chap. ix. 7, 8). There is in the mention of her *glory* a bitter sarcasm, which turns however in the following strophe into the gravest truth. For—

(2) This glory, this pride of the northern kingdom must first be humbled, its redundant fulness be thinned. When the great day of harvest comes, the time of decision (Joel iii. 13), when the harvest time carries away the ears in the shocks, and the judgment carries away men in crowds; when the northern kingdom comes to count its people who survive, it is as when one gleans ears in the Valley of Rephaim. This valley, which is south from Jerusalem, seems singled out here, because, as it lay near to Jerusalem, it was well cleared out by those who came from the Captital to glean.

(3) And, in truth, when this last judgment is accomplished, they will turn from their many idols and things connected with idols, to the true God, who alone can help and save. The *altars* are here probably mentioned in regard to the fondness of Ahaz for new modes of worship (2 Kings xvi. 10).

(4) The fortresses also in their own land, to which the kingdom now foolishly trusts, shall so little avail them, that they will be laid waste and deserted, as formerly in the land of Canaan the densely inhabited valleys and its hill-tops were abandoned before Israel, when they pressed on under Joshua; a very appropriate comparison for humbling the national pride. The figure to denote the valleys and hill-tops is the more appropriate, as the old Canaanites were distinguished as dwellers in the hills and dwellers in the valleys; and the former named Amorites, from Amir, a summit; the latter Hittites, *i. e.* Netherlanders. This, continues the Prophet, is all because Ephraim has forsaken the true help and fortress; therefore it may plant its fields with choice vines of the stranger, *i. e.* with attractive idolatrous customs and rites: they apply at

the planting great pains and thought, that these poisonous plants may thrive and flower, and on the morning they are still rejoicing over their growth; but the evening comes, after the bitter laborious day, and when they should reap the reward of their labours, the harvest has suddenly disappeared, and the cheerful morning become a day of incurable sickness. Thus there press on each other at the conclusion thoughts and images, and the conclusion is thus plainly marked.

It might be supposed that Isaiah added to this prophecy those on the strange nations (chap. xiv. 28 to the end of chap. xvi.). They would be here so far in their place, as we see that at this time foreigners, rather than Jerusalem, were threatened by the Assyrians. But as the next book followed very close upon this, the question is not one of much importance.

BOOK III.

THE THIRD WORK OF ISAIAH.

Ch. I. 1—31. XIV. 28—XVI. 14. XXI. 11—17.

AS the great events of the world's history since the first days of Hezekiah's reign thronged closer together, and Isaiah's activity was proportionately increased, so his productions in writing followed in quicker succession. Hezekiah again favoured in the kingdom the better religion and morality: it seemed that a first noble fruit of Isaiah's former activity was to ripen in the centre of the kingdom: and a new powerful impulse from the power of true religion might call forth a free harmonious action on the part of king and prophet.

But Hezekiah's first attempt at a more spirited bearing towards the assumption of Assyria drew on him at once the enmity of Assyria; and though its great king was at that time engaged far away from Palestine, he yet probably encouraged the surrounding lesser nations to fall upon Judah. Broken up as the kingdom had been through the misrule of Ahaz, these devastating hordes of the Philistines and other such nations threw the then Jerusalem into an unexpected commotion: but, while in it and around it all was

troubled, the large towns, grown hardened in their disobedience, and of late under Hezekiah's rule become habituated to hypocrisy, would have none of that true repentance and amendment which Isaiah had so long called for. He therefore resolved to work with his pen in bringing into closer connection his two earlier works, and increased this new edition by important additions such as the needs of the time seemed to require. To this new enlarged edition he added, as a preface, Chapter I. as the most suitable introduction to the book, and at the end, with the wholly new outlook into the heathen world which now opened out to him, adds a mass of utterances on foreign nations.

The Impeachment. (Chapter I.)

How long and how often has the Prophet—but we may as truly say, and this was his deepest feeling, the Spirit of God which he feels moving within him so mightily and incessantly—tried everything to lead back the people of Jehovah in the centre point of His worship to that pureness and firmness of the divine life, without which it could not really amend its condition! He resolved to make one more effort to soften the hard heart of the people; and never from the heart and mouth of the Prophet flowed forth an utterance like this, in which the *man* so entirely falls into the background, and the most deeply inspired voice comes forth from him.

As to the time when it was written we have the following marks to guide us. From vv. 7—9 we see that enemies then were laying waste the country of Judah, and threatened the Capital. These enemies are called strangers, a term simply corresponding to

our *foreigners.* We cannot refer it to the invasion under Sennacherib, for then the Prophet's language was of encouragement, utterly different from that here. The inroads here spoken of may have been those of the Assyrians, who we know invaded the country, when Isaiah, as we are told, *rebelled against them and served them not;* but it seems more likely that the Philistines and other surrounding nations are intended: that hostilities broke out on their part at the commencement of this reign we know from Ch. xiv. 28—32. It is probable, however, that these were instigated by Assyria.

It is true that under Hezekiah the foreign customs and religions introduced by Ahaz were no longer favoured at court; on the contrary, the prescriptions of the ancient service of Jehovah were again scrupulously observed: but too well did Isaiah see through the hypocrisy of these men, who had conformed to the court religion and sought to distinguish themselves by their loud profession, while they left in peace the favourite popular superstitions, and even in secret favoured them. The arrangement and the action of this piece resembles a high legal process. Jehovah appears as plaintiff with his witnesses; Israel as the accused; the Prophet as mediator. Now to a regular process there belongs (1) The bringing forward the charge, with appeal to the proper witnesses; (2) The setting aside any plea which might be brought against it beforehand; (3) That to the accused all freedom of defence should be allowed; (4) The judgment is delivered. Thus this section falls naturally into four strophes of like length. We have then first the charge; secondly an answer to the plea, that the correct service of God is sufficient; and after that the guilt of the people has been

proved on its own evidence (v. 18—23); the threat of new punishment breaks forth in an impetuous storm: but this punishment has a purifying end, and will bring back the kingdom to its original destiny, and open to it the magnificent future.

1. (1—5.)

Hear, ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah speaks.

I brought up children to be great and tall, but they have become untrue to me.

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's stall. Israel is without knowledge, my people is without understanding. O sinful nation, guilt-laden people, brood of criminals, unworthy sons, who forsake Jehovah, despise the Holy One of Israel, who are gone backwards; why will ye be smitten any more, sin yet further? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot to the crown is no soundness therein, wounds and bruises and running sores, not pressed out, and not bound up, and not softened with oil! Your land is a wilderness, your cities burned with fire, your ground, barbarians consume it before your eyes, and it is a wilderness, like the overthrow of Sodom*: and the daughter of Zion is left as a tent in the vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a beseiged city. Had the Lord of Hosts not left us a small remnant, we should be as Sodom, we should be like to Gomorrah.

2. (10—15.)

Hear the word of Jehovah, ye people of Sodom, give ear to the teaching of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. What is to me the multitude of your offerings? saith Jehovah; I am full of the offerings of rams and the fat of stalled calves, and have no pleasure in the blood of your lambs and kids. When you come

* In ver. 7 read סדם for זרים.

to appear before me, who desires this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring me no more meat offerings of vanity; it is incense of abomination to me; new moon and sabbath, calling of assemblies; I cannot bear falsehood and high festival: your new moons and feasts my soul hateth, they are a burden unto me, I am weary to bear them! And when ye spread forth your hands I hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood! Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, set right the oppressor, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

3. (I. 18—23.)

Come then, and let us come to the trial, saith Jehovah: were your sins as purple, may they be as snow! were they red like scarlet, may they become like wool! If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fat of the land; but if ye be unwilling and disobedient, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

How is the faithful city become an harlot!

The city filled with equity, wherein judgment dwelt, but now murder.

Thy silver is become dross, thy wine adulterated with water; thy counsellors are traitors and thief associates: every one loveth a gift, and runneth after reward: they judge not the fatherless, and the widow's cause comes not before them.

4. (I. 24—30.)

Therefore this is the sentence of the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: I will take satisfaction of my opponents, and revenge me of mine enemies; and will bring back my hand against thee, throughly purging away thy dross, and will remove all thy lead: I will make thy judges as in

former time, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards they shall name thee The place of righteousness, the true city: Zion shall be redeemed through judgment, and her converts through righteousness. But the destruction of the evil-doers and sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be destroyed. Then shall they be ashamed of the terebinths which ye desire, and blush before the gardens which ye have loved; yea, ye shall be as the terebinth whose leaf withers, and as a garden which hath no water: and the strong shall become tow, and his work a spark; so burn they both together, with none to quench them.

(1) Jehovah's complaint is that of a father against unthankful, faithless sons. He went before them, in the youth of the nation, as Hosea had already taught, with fatherly love and care, and formed them as His own into a great people; but they shew less understanding and gratitude than the ox: heaven and earth are called to witness; those witnesses of all the evil done in the earth. The Plaintiff here turns himself to the accused, and asks him in words wherein are mingled pity and reproof, why would he make it necessary to punish him still more, when he had suffered so severely already for his sins? Then, dropping the figure, the state of the country is described: it is laid waste by enemies which devastate it, so that its utter ruin is almost as that of Sodom and Gomorrah; while Jerusalem, which was still spared, is left so isolated, its communications so completely cut off, that it was like a tent in a vineyard.

(2) The Prophet goes on to state that the offerings, so far from being a satisfaction to God, are an abhorrence to Him, as offered by unclean hands.

(3) This heavy charge having been stated, and the plea in mitiga-

tion set aside, the Prophet in the name of God adds, "Let us proceed to the trial."

He drops for a minute the character of plaintiff, and declares His wish that the people were able to clear itself; that its guilt, which seems so deeply indied, may become as wool. The eternal rule by which the Judge deals out His sentence, though well known, is here once more set forth; it seems here to be given in a quotation. But what has the people now to say for itself? There is a long pause before v. 21, to give time for reply; but the silence acknowledges the justice of the charge: and then the Prophet himself chants an elegy over the city fallen so completely from its earlier virgin purity, and this strophe has to close with the sad admission that the conditions of justification stated in the second strophe are wholly wanting. Thus the last words of that strophe and of this are in bitter accordance.

(4) And the righteous divine sentence must now proceed. The dross and the lead must be purged away in the fire of divine judgment, in order that the good and approved may combine for a new commencement, a recurrence as it were to the days of David: thus shall result the redemption of Zion and her converts, when the false gods and their services under the terebinths and in the pleasant gardens shall be all put away; when the idols and their worshippers shall have been proved powerless, like a withered terebinth and a waterless garden: for the worshipper and his idol shall bring destruction on each other; as the tow and the spark when brought together must cause flame wherein both are consumed.

The Utterances on Strange Nations.

When the nearest neighbours of Judah at that time, merely on account of the low estate of the kingdom of David, pressed the more

on it after the death of Ahaz, it was a timely warning on the part of Isaiah to call to them that they had much more to fear from the Assyrians than Judah. But meanwhile the time was rapidly approaching when the Assyrians attained the height of their power, and threatened to subdue all the surrounding countries as far as Africa. It was then Isaiah turned his eyes more keenly on all the small countries around, and pondered in the light of the religion of Jehovah their circumstances and their hopes, their past, and their now threatening future: there was, moreover, at that time a constant intercourse between all these countries, and not unfrequently an embassy from such a threatened people might come to Jerusalem, to get tidings, or to ask for help: thus the activity of a great prophet would be called forth, whether he were applied to for counsel directly, or whether he felt himself merely inwardly determined to give his views, (see xiv. 32, xviii. 2, xxi. 11; also xvi. 1—6, and Jeremiah xxvii. 3). Of utterances of this sort we have four, generally very short, in all which the Assyrians are set forth as the instruments of righteous punishment, through whom Jehovah would make Himself felt even by the heathen, in order to turn their thoughts to their gross moral corruption. These four, at least, we may consider published in this work of Isaiah; possibly it contained others.

The first of these is, however, in many respects distinguished from the three others.

On the Philistines. (XIV. 28—32.)

This oracle was, as its superscription signifies, delivered orally before Ahaz' death, but was now for the first time published in writing. The Philistines, partially subdued ever since David's time, had taken

advantage of the weak government and difficulties of Ahaz to free themselves entirely from the rule of Judah; they had even made conquests in the limits of Judah (2 Chron. xxviii. 18) compare Isaiah ix. 11.; But at that time Isaiah had bidden them not to become too arrogant on their success against Judah, not to be too jubilant, as shortly a much harder master than Judah had ever been would come upon them, laying waste everything. True, Judah is now unfortunate and much cast down, but he has an unfailing spring of eternal hope and future salvation; and Zion, in her most threatening danger, has a refuge which no heathen sanctuary can offer. So Philistia in her need will experience to her terror how little cause she has to rejoice that she has withdrawn from the rule, and consequently also from the sanctuary and protection of the God of Israel. These rich contents are set forth here, with extreme brevity and point, in two short strophes of two verses each.

1. (xiv. 28—30.)

In the year of king Ahaz' death came this burden.

Rejoice not, whole Palestina, that the rod is broken which smote thee: for from the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and its fruit is a flying dragon. And on my pasture* feed the poor, and the helpless lie down peacefully; but I slew thy roots through hunger, and thy residue he will slay.

2. (xiv. 31, 32.)

Howl, thou gate; cry, thou city; tremble, O whole Palestina! for from the north comes smoke, and none is single in his ranks. And what shall they reply to the messengers of the people? That Jehovah has founded Zion, and in it the poor of my people trust.

* In ver. 30, for בכורי read ב כורי, כורים being for כרים.

(1) Dropping the figure, the first strophe assures the Philistines that on the ruin of the comparatively mild Jewish supremacy shall arise the far worse of the Assyrians, and thereby at length the complete devastation of their country.

Those who are now most unhappy and helpless—the Jews—will then lie down as on a peaceful pasturage, led by Jehovah as the best Shepherd; while He through the consequences of the war slays thee, leaving neither residue nor remainder.

(2) Rather, in place of malicious joy, howl and tremble, gate and city—whole Palestina: for from the North, from Assyria, there comes, as the Prophet already sees in vision, that smoke which announces the approach of a great army: and in truth there approaches a host in whose ranks prevail the most wonderful order, discipline, and courage (cf. v. 27). When in this need the Philistines send ambassadors to their former sovereign city, they will find there calm trust in Jehovah and His sanctuary.

It would be a natural transition for Isaiah from Palestine in the south-west to Moab in the south-east. Jeremiah (xlvii. and xlviii.) takes these countries in the same order. It would be equally natural for him to pass from Moab to the two short oracles on Arabian countries (xxi. 11—17), as these countries further to the east readily allied themselves with Moab. But, further, these three oracles have the greatest resemblance to each other. Isaiah in each of them adapted oracles of older prophets, and especially of *one* older, as will appear below.

He did not deliver these orally before committing them to writing, as in the oracle on Palestine, but connects them by writing alone into one book. The parts, on the other hand, which now

come between (from xvii. 1 to xxi. 10) cannot on many grounds have had originally this place. The simple title at xv. 1 might, after the parenthesis of xiv. 28, come from the Prophet; but the other two readings (xxi. 11, 13) are plainly from a later hand: it becomes then doubtful whether all three are not from this same hand.

On Moab. (Ch. xv., xvi.)

The people of Moab—nearly allied to Israel, but still heathen, and since their conquest by David often involved in bloody wars with Israel—were at that time free, and could not readily be again subjected by Israel; but since it had thrown off the yoke of Israel only to fall back into a more unrestrained heathen life, Isaiah had yet more ground than with the Philistines to forebode that the threatened Assyrian conquest would bring a righteous judgment on them, and that the haughty people would then wish in vain not to have fallen away from Judah. But the way in which Isaiah sets forth this subject-matter is here quite new; he repeats the prophecy of an older prophet, and merely adds a few words of his own (xvi. 13, 14): closer enquiry shews, however, that the old oracle had been itself supplemented by a subsequent prophet, by the addition xvi. 1—6; hence that we must distinguish here three prophets.

(1) At the time of the earliest prophet, as his words plainly shew, a devastating host had suddenly fallen upon Moab, had stormed his capital, and thrown the whole country into the extremest confusion and distress; it was probably an inroad and night attack of Arabian tribes, the northern neighbours of Moab: in any case, that the victorious inroad came from the north-east is clear from

the flight being directed towards the south-west. General wailing arose through the whole country; many hurried to the holy places which lay mostly on the mountain-tops, there, full of despair, to cry to the national gods, while many others fled towards the south. But the prophet, though deeply touched at such misfortune, and his human compassion flowing forth, could, in the higher divine temper, see no true salvation for a people which still turned to their false gods, and, even now in their deepest need, only sought protection from them: this sudden and passing evil seemed to him only the prelude to future, yet heavier, chastisements of Moab, which were necessary to bring to the acknowledgment of the true God that people so deeply sunk in heathenism.

The prophecy, exclusive of the interpolated portion, consists of two strophes, in the first of which the mourning for and compassion for Moab are the leading features: only at the end the prophetic foreboding escapes, that yet heavier sufferings are impending. A similar strain of lamentation is found in the second strophe, but it closes with the announcement of deliverance for Moab, only when it has completely discovered the helplessness of its gods, and turned to the true deliverer. Who this oldest prophet may be it is hard to say; the singular sensibility, and the style and language, make us conjecture a very ancient prophet, of whom nothing else has survived. A sensibility so carried away by sadness and sympathy, melting with softness of a rather elegiac than prophetic mood, is unique among the older prophets. Much in the style and tone of this prophet reminds one strongly of Hosea, but the resemblance is not sufficient to identify them.

There are several peculiar words and forms which are hardly

found elsewhere: the abundance of the plays on words is remarkable in a prophet of this early date, and the method in the structure of the strophes shews itself here in its earliest manner. Each of the three strophes falls into two smaller ones, and the first is formed quite like an ancient elegy. But we now know that the poets and prophets of the Ten Tribes were very early fond of an extremely artificial style, tender, and richly adorned with plays on words. Now as the prophet knew well, evidently from personal inspection, the boundaries of Moab here so accurately described, and with great interest followed everything, he was certainly, like Hosea, an old prophet beyond Jordan, and belonged to the Ten Tribes, to which Moab also belonged aforetime. Now we know that Moab was recovered by Jeroboam II. for Israel (2 Kings xiv. 25). It had revolted from the Ten Tribes about 897 (see 2 Kings iii. 5). This prophecy then seems to belong to this time of independence. But the interpolated words xvi. 1—6 are of quite another character: they are much more in the style of Isaiah (cf. especially v. 4 with ch. xxix. 20): but as he states at the conclusion that he has given the whole quotation as he found it, we may explain the resemblance of language in these two verses by supposing the verse of the older prophet to have been in the mind of Isaiah when he wrote.

That righteous king to whom Moab's petition was addressed (xvi. 4, 5) was probably Uzziah in his better days. At that time Moab must have been again threatened by a dangerous enemy, but the Ten T[illegible] hen very weak it sought help and protection [illegible] Prophet advised not to grant, as the people [illegible]m of a wish to be converted to the true [illegible]ver, that this protection was granted later.

We find (2 Chron. xxvi. 8) that the Ammonites at least submitted to Uzziah). When now this prophet counselled the king not to grant the protection, he suitably inserted his addition between the two strophes, as if the prophetic complaint of the second were the consequence of the protection at present refused. The mention also of the important city Selah as apparently belonging to Judah would agree well with this date, for we know it was taken from the Edomites by Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 7). Further, the words of v. 4 point to a time of disorders in Judah which were probably those at the end of Amaziah's reign. We may then assume that this prophet was labouring in Jerusalem about fifty years before Isaiah's mission began. If now this were the purport of the earlier prophecy, it is clear how easily Isaiah might apply it with a small appendix to his own time. The new yet mightier enemy, and the last misfortune which the earlier prophet had foreboded for Moab, had not yet arrived; but now through the threatening attitude of the Assyrians (of whose subsequent relations with Moab we unfortunately know nothing) the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy seemed near and no longer to be delayed; and this is the single thought which Isaiah adds in his own words, vv. 13, 14. Jeremiah (ch. xlviii.) seems to have had before him the language of this prophecy.

1. (xv. 1—9.)

The burden on Moab.

Surely in the night on which Ar Moab was stormed, surely in the night when Kir Moab was stormed, was it destroyed.

Habbajith and Debon went up to the high places to weep. For Nebo and for Madeba howls Moab: on all his heads baldness, every beard shaven off. It has put on sackcloth in its streets: on the

roofs of its houses and in its squares it all mourns, melting in tears.

For Heshbon and Elealeh it mourns; as far as Jahash its voice is heard: therefore Moab's mighty men cry out, Woe! his soul is woeful within him.

My heart mourns for Moab, for its fugitives to Zoar, to Eglath-Shelisha: for Luhith's height they ascend with weeping, for towards Horonaim they raise a cry of ruin. For the waters of Nimrim are dried up: for the grass withers, greenness vanishes, the herb is no more. Therefore its possessions which it had gotten, and their substance, they bear away beyond the brook of the desert.

Yea, the cry goes round Moab's borders; as far as Eglaim is its wailing, as far as Beer Elim its wailing! Yea, Dimon's waters are full of blood: for I bring on Dimon something more, on Moab's fugitives a lion, and on that left in the ground.

2. (XVI. 1—6.)

"Send ye the lambs of the prince from Selah to the wilderness, away to the mountain of the daughter of Zion." And as wandering birds, a nest cleared out, are Moab's daughters—the fords of Arnon. "Offer counsel, give judgment, make (O Zion) thy shadow like the night in the glaring noontide; hide outcasts, betray not the fugitive; let Moab's outcasts* dwell with thee, be to them a refuge from the plunderer: for the tyranny has ceased, the devastation is at an end. Vanished are the tormenters out of the land, and the throne shall be established in mercy; and there sits on it with truth, in David's tabernacle, a judge seeking judgment and skilled in equity."

We have heard the haughtiness of Moab, the very haughty; his pride and his haughtiness and his arrogance, the dishonesty of his boastings.

* Ch. xvi. 4, read נִדְחֵי for נִדָּחַי.

3. (XVI. 7—14.)

Therefore wail Moab for Moab, wail all of it. Sigh for the grapes of Kir Haresheth, simply destroyed. For Heshbon's plains wither, Sibma's vine: the heathen lords have beaten down its noble suckers which reached to Jazer, which spread through the deserts, his saplings which luxuriated, which went beyond the sea.

Let me therefore weep with the weeping of Jazer for Sibma's vine; let me water thee with my tears, Heshbon and Elealeh: for the wild war-cry fell on thy fruit and corn harvest, and joy and exultation are taken from the fruitful field: no more in the vineyards shall they sing or shout, for no grape-treader treads in the winepresses. The cry I still.

Therefore my compassions are stirred like the harp for Moab, and my inward parts for Kir Haresh. But when Moab appears, when she weeps in vain at the high places, and comes into her sanctuary to pray, and prevails not, [*then will she entirely give up Chemosh, and meekly learn to turn to Jehovah*].

This is the saying which Jehovah long ago uttered to Moab. But now thus saith Jehovah: In three years, as the years of a hireling, Moab's majesty shall be humbled, with all the great crowd, and the remainder few and small—not many.

Some of the localities here mentioned are better known of late through the labours of De Saulcy and Tristram, but many are still unfixed. By Kir Moab the fortress of Moab seems intended, as also by Kir Haresheth or Kir Haresh. The name Dimon in v. 9 seems placed for Dibon only to make a play on the word Dam (blood). These chapters were evidently before the mind of Jeremiah when he wrote his Chapter xlviii. The conjectural addition in brackets after v. 10 finds some support from v. 13 of that chapter, where *and Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh* is given as the end and purpose of the divine judgment.

(1) Of the three lesser strophes, which are very clearly distinguished from each other, the first describes the general consternation and lamentation which followed the sudden overthrow of the two capitals: the second and third pass on to the further consequences, the flight over the borders, the carnage among the fugitives, and the evil which threatens in the withering away of the country, as though smitten by God's curse.

Of the towns here mentioned, Ar-Moab is the regular capital. Kir-Moab, properly Moab's wall or fortress, appears as a strong fortress to have been the next in importance. The invading host seems to have divided into two parts, so as to besiege the two together, and were completely successful. The lamentation took the two forms of simple wailing and supplication on the high places, as Nebo and Madeba; the wailing is heard on the roofs of the houses and in the squares; even the warriors of Moab cry out. (There is here a play of words on the similar sounds of crying and of pain.) The Prophet cannot but mourn with them, when he sees how the fugitives hurry as far as Zoar and Eglath Shelishija (mentioned in Jeremiah xlviii. 34) on the south-west border; how they in this flight, climb, weeping, the hard ascent of Luchith, while on the opposite descent of Horonaim (Jerem. xlviii. 5) a like cry is raised: nature herself is represented as pining away in the general grief. A part of the fugitives in the mean time take the route of the *brook of the desert*, on the southern border, carrying their property with them. This brook of the desert is the same stream mentioned (Amos vi. 14) as the most southern boundary of the kingdom of David, at its greatest extent.

In the last of these lesser strophes God in person announces: I bring something new upon Dimon, a lion, a yet more terrible enemy

to destroy what has been saved to Moab. (2) Then shall they seek protection from their former liege lord in Jerusalem. They were advised to send the lambs, *i.e.* the traditional yearly tribute of the liege lord, out from Sela (or in Greek, Petra), southwards of the brook of the desert, in which large commercial town they might easily meet and conveniently purchase the flocks to send to Zion. At the same time, in trembling haste, like shelterless birds, the daughters—*i.e.* the several towns of Moab, the fords of Arnon, *i.e.* the dwellers on the banks of that principal river of Moab—hurry towards Jerusalem with urgent prayers for counsel, for its intervention, for protection in this hot day, and shelter for the fugitives. Unhappily, the ground which they offer in support of their petition, and even this haughty speech, betray the yet unimproved temper of the people: they conceive the earlier hard rule, which (so it is intimated) had caused them to revolt, is now at an end in Judah; the throne will now be upheld through mercy and truth, and a ruler equally zealous and experienced in equity sits upon David's throne and in his house. But how unseemly to seek at such a time to excuse their earlier revolt by a false charge! From the throne, then, the answer is returned: "We have heard the haughty and unjust words of Moab; we reply, "Since she is so little penitent there is no help for her." (3) And so must the Prophet also leave Moab to herself and to further chastisement, if peradventure she will yet discern the vanity of her gods, and turn humbly to Jehovah. But the Prophet can but mourn for her; three times must his elegy burst forth anew, though now more calmly before it comes to rest: for it is a land fruitful in vines and fruit-trees of all kinds. The luxury and populousness of the country is compared to a luxuriant vine—a favourite figure with the poets of the Old Testament.

The Prophet must also chime in with the mourning for the country, robbed of its beauty. For a wild cry, the cry of the enemy, fell with sudden disturbance on the rich harvest and its riotous shout; and, for the future, the joyous shout of the harvest will no more sound in those fruitful fields, for a higher power (here comes the first person once more) will through the warlike shout bring this peaceful shout to silence. Therefore the compassionate feelings of the Prophet cannot rest. Yet one hope remains—the eternal hope: when Moab, a prey to fresh calamities, appears as now in his idolatrous temples (cf. for this use of the word *appear* see ch. i. 12), or rather wearies himself (again a play on words in the original), and in the most complete despair cannot even pray—he will be ashamed of his god Chemosh, and learn in Jehovah true humility.

In vv. 13, 14, every syllable sounds like the majestic thunder of Isaiah. *As the days of an hireling, i. e.* in strict measure, not to be exceeded.

The two following oracles, xxi. 11—17, were originally both extremely short, each consisting only of two verses: for any one who has learnt to distinguish Isaiah's style will recognise it as commencing at v. 15, where it has the most unmistakeable peculiar Isaiah style. We have here likewise two (in conception and form) most remarkable oracles, of such condensation and mysteriousness as are found nowhere else. It seems as though here we heard the very earliest, almost capriciously short and pointed utterances, which are all the more effective in instigating the hearer to reflect somewhat deeper on the matter so put forth, and to search out for himself the deepest meaning. They are, in fact, in so far like to

the heathen oracles, and yet Isaiah has thought good on sufficient grounds to appropriate them and further evolve their meaning. Who this prophet may be must be left undecided. It was probably a prophet of the northern kingdom. We have here probably the earliest oracles subsequent to the secession of the Ten Tribes now remaining.

As to the title in v. 11, "The Burden of Dumah," it might be supposed to refer to the Arabian tribe mentioned Gen. xxv. 14, which had been overtaken by some sudden calamity, tidings of which had come to the Prophet by way of Seir; but in that view the prominent way in which Seir is mentioned would seem unnecessary: it seems better then to take it as *a burden of silence*, which was added as a gloss by a later reader to express the character of the oracle. The matter of it, in any case, warrants us in styling it with the LXX—

An Oracle on Edom. (Ch. xxi. 11, 12.)

This is of the most beautiful prophetic meaning. For any true prophet must, in the contemplation of the destinies of all men and nations, stand as a watchman on his watch and know what the time is: accordingly, it seems to the Prophet that an anxious voice calls to him from Edom, whether the long fearful night of misfortune is not nearly over: What time of night is it? Glad as he would be to give a favourable answer, knowing from his deeper sense that these people, sunk so deep in heathenism, must be yet much chastised before they attain to the truth, he is able to give no favourable answer, but rather conceals evasively the sad anticipation of a yet long duration of this night.

Burden of Silence. (xxi. 11—12.)

They call to me out of Seir, Watchman, what time of night? Watchman, what time of night? The watchman replies, The morning is come, and also the night. Will ye enquire, enquire ye: return again, come!

The repetition of the question in v. 11 paints the anxiety of the questioner. The answer is *The morning is come, and night also:* everything has its time; and if before a clear bright morning come, the night is now come again, and does not vanish immediately. I cannot give you any better consolation. In order, however, not to appear unfeeling, he adds, Will you enquire, enquire! only, "return and come again:" for the present I can say nothing more.

Several very rare words and forms are found here in the original.

On the Arabians. (Ch. xxi. 13—17.)

The caravans of the Arabian tribe of Dedan (cf. Job vi. 19), who had become very wealthy and powerful through their transport trade, had plainly, at the time of the older prophet, been attacked and shamefully put to flight by stronger enemies; so that the proud tribe, in utter helplessness, had to put up with petitioning to others for the very necessaries of life, *e.g.* to the dwellers in the land of Teman. Since these Arabs had now gone far astray from the pure religion, it cannot surprise us that the old prophet feels impelled to offer this tribe no comfort, but rather dismisses it with fine contempt. Now, in Isaiah's time, the Assyrian power was threatening these Arabian tribes, so that Sennacherib was even called (Herod. ii. 141) king of the Arabians. The Prophet accordingly applies, while enlarging, the old oracle, and expresses the

presentiment, that that first blow which the Arabs had suffered from the Assyrians would soon be followed by much heavier humiliation of all the predatory Arab tribes: he groups them together under the name of the predominant tribe at that time, that of Kedar. Accordingly, after, in a first short strophe, that historical fact had been mentioned, the prophetic intention is brought forward in the second.

Oracle on the Sandy Desert (Arabia).

1. (XXI. 13—15.)

In the wood, in the desert must ye pass the night, ye caravans of Dedan! Bring water to the thirsty inhabitants of the land of Tema, offer his bread to the fugitive! For they fled before swords, before the drawn sword and the bent bow, and before the weight of war.

2. (XXI. 16, 17.)

For thus saith the Lord to me, Within a year, as are the years of a hireling, all Kedar's majesty comes to an end; and the rest of the archer force of Kedar's brave sons shall be few: for Jehovah the God of Israel hath spoken it.

In its evasive pointed brevity this oracle closely resembles, with all its other differences, that which had preceded. *In the wood,* even *in the desert,* the latter being the worse, must ye pass the night, and find no inn nor comfortable camping ground! O that is hard! but I know nothing better for you: at the best the neighbouring Tema may be asked to meet the fugitive with water, with his (*i.e.* his needful) bread of charity: it is hard to have to accept bread of charity, but I know nothing better. Enough of this! The curtain is let fall, and it is intimated clearly enough

that they deserve nothing better. The feeling of suppressed sympathy in the previous oracle is wholly wanting here; but the conclusion is the same in both. It is to be noticed with what skill Isaiah attaches to the last word of v. 14 his further explanation and applications.

In v. 14, הֵרָיוּ has, as it should have, the punctuation of the imperative. The perfect would be הֵרִיוּ. Latin punctuators must however have failed to discern this, and hence wrongly put קֶדְמוּ for קַדְמוּ. The accents in v. 14 are also incorrect.

It is at once apparent that עֲרַב (v. 13) cannot in the old prophet denote Arabia, but has the signification of עֲרָבָה, *steppes*. The earliest places where it is given as a proper name to the inhabitants are Jeremiah iii. 2, and Ezekiel xxvii. 21. The later editor of Isaiah's book was under a misconception when he took this word as a proper name, and rendered, *The burden on Arabia.*

That the northern Arabs, who alone must in such prophecies be understood, were distinguished as archers, we know from Gen. xxi. 20.

BOOK IV.

THE FOURTH WORK OF ISAIAH.

Chh. XXII., XXIII.

NEXT, in order of time, may be placed the chapters which follow in our Bible, chapters xxii., xxiii. In the interval which elapsed between this prophecy and the preceding, Assyria had proceeded from attacks against the surrounding nations to an invasion of Judæa itself. An Assyrian host had advanced by, probably, much the same line as is described ch. x. 28—32, where Isaiah sets forth the line of march which, in his prophetic eye, they were taking. An army went out to meet the Assyrian host, but hardly had they seen this strange and fierce enemy than they fled in disgraceful flight, and then the rulers in Jerusalem hastened to stop by a truce the enemy's devastations. Notwithstanding this humiliation, as if to drown care, and to shew their defiance of the sad forebodings and threatenings of the Prophet, the people of the Capital give themselves up to noisy revelry. This was more than the Prophet could bear: he was astonished, but collected himself and announced to the revellers the heavy thought which this behaviour aroused in him.

We possess in chapter xxii. evidently the original report of his most anxious and fearless activity at that time. Chapter xxiii. may well be referred to this same period. We may then suppose, in conclusion, that Isaiah pubished anew his earlier work with these appendices; doubtless with the help of the same school of disciples spoken of in the Second Book.

Harangue against the People. (Ch. xxii. 1—14.)

It embraces all the essential parts of what Isaiah had addressed to the whole people on that day of foolish tumultuousness. It is a speech of human wonder and grief, but flames forth into fury and a crushing denunciation, such as we find nowhere else in Isaiah, but which the importance of the moment fully justifies. The Prophet cannot join in this noise, for the shameful overthrow which preceded it, and because he forebodes yet worse from a not distant future (vv. 1—5): and when he reflects how utterly the last greatest danger had failed to lead the people to better and serious thoughts (vv. 6—11); how rather they had changed the solemn call to repentance into its mocking opposite, and given themselves up to wild joy, in order to escape from the seriousness of affairs in God's eyes; he must declare that here is the greatest and heaviest of human sins, that against the Holy Ghost (vv. 11—14). It is all in one utterance, but falls into three shorter strophes, of which the last, as the most troubled, concludes the most rapidly and briefly. The later collector gave to the piece in reference to v. 5, the name of—

Burden of the Valley of Prophecy.

1. (XXII. 1—7.)

What aileth thee then, that thou art gone up together to the roofs?

O thou filled with noise, thou tumultuous town, rollicking city! thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor victims of war. All thy captains fled in a body before the bow, they were taken captive: all who were found of thee were taken captive in a body; they fled far away.

Therefore I say, Look away from me; let me weep bitterly, hasten not to comfort me for the wasting of the daughter of my people: for the Lord Jehovah of Hosts hath a day of trouble and of trampling down, and of perplexity in the valley of Prophecy. Kir is breaking up, and Shoa is at the mountain.

2. (XXII. 8—11.)

And Elam bore the quiver in a troop of horsemen, and Kir laid bare the shield; and thy choicest valleys were full of charioteers, and the horsemen, yea, they stormed at the door. And he laid bare Judah's covering: then lookedst thou on that day to the armour of the forest-house; and the breaches of the city of David ye saw, how many they were, and collected the water of the lower pool: and the houses of Jerusalem counted ye, and demolished the houses to strengthen the walls: and ye made a channel between the two walls for the wall of the old pool; but ye looked not to Him who wrought it, and Him who saw it from far, saw ye not!

3. (XXII. 12—14.)

And the Lord Jehovah of Hosts called on that day to weep and to mourn, to pluck out the hair, and to put on sackcloth: but behold merriment and rejoicing, killing cattle and slaughter-

ing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine, eating and drinking; for "to-morrow we die."

Then in my ears reveals Himself the Lord of Hosts; Never shall this sin be forgiven till you die! saith the Lord Jehovah of Hosts.

(1) The Prophet going forth abroad sees unexpectedly the whole city collected on the flat roofs of the houses to indulge in feasting and noisy merriment. Isaiah calls to them that they have no cause for exultation, as their lost soldiery had not fallen honourably in battle, but with their captains had fled shamefully, or been captured in their flight. Therefore they should rather let him weep, for he sees at the same time that this thoughtless joy would soon be followed by yet greater suffering of the loved mother city; and that Jehovah is already thinking on a day on which every conceivable misfortune shall fall on the city, when there shall be no escape from the motley masses of the enemy suddenly falling on the city, storming against the holy mount in wild fury.

And what tribulation for the Prophet, that this should have happened in the valley of Vision, that is of Prophecy, in the lower city of Jerusalem, where he himself and so many others before him had proclaimed the divine word—for the most part, alas, in vain!

(2) For when the easternmost nations from Elam and the northernmost from Kir (Amos i. 5) advanced in well-ordered and accoutred troops of horse; when actually the fairest valleys round about the town were occupied; when the troopers plundered even to the gates of Jerusalem; nay, when Jehovah already *laid bare the covering of Judah, i.e.* shewed quite bare and without a vail to the enemy the innermost secret condition, and consequently the

true weakness of the city: then the great men of the city looked anxiously indeed after all outward means of defence, preparing against a siege (which did not come about); but to the true Author of their misfortune, to Jehovah, who had long in silence prepared it, and announced it by His prophets; to Him they looked not to ask for and to do His Will. Rather—

(3) On the contrary, when they had been expressly urged by the Prophet to solemn sorrow and repentance; instead thereof they gave themselves up to the most unbridled, thoughtless jollity. Therefore the Prophet hears, clearly sounding in his ears, the fearful utterance of Jehovah, that this sin of wilful opposition to the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, and must, step by step, destroy them without remedy.

Harangue against Shebna. (XXII. 15—25.)

The harangue which follows in our Bible was probably delivered about the same time. It is directed against one of those great men, often as a body censured by him. The position of this man gave him the greatest importance for all national concerns. He was, as we learn from v. 16 and from his un-Hebrew name, a foreigner, whom probably Ahaz, the preceding king, had raised to the high office of palace chamberlain. That the proud foreigner had in many ways misused his dignity, especially by favouring unworthy men, admits of no doubt; and he was now engaged, through the building of a family sepulchre, in perpetuating in Jerusalem his name and family: so great was the sanctity which the ancients attached to such sepulchres. It was as though the man would boldly challenge posterity! But Isaiah feels impelled by the Spirit to take from him this satisfaction, in foretelling that a stronger hand would soon

lay hold of him, and cast him into exile (*i.e.* through the agency of the Assyrians). And as, at the same time, another man in Jerusalem, by name Eliakim, appeared much more worthy of this post, the prophecy in continuation recommends him as the man chosen by Jehovah and found worthy; and concludes briefly with the prospect (v. 25) of Shebna's family and followers sharing in his fall; a plain token that at that time the kingdom suffered more through the immoral favourites of the man than through himself. The purport of this address is thus in complete accordance with that of the preceding.

That king Hezekiah, gladly as he attended to the Prophet, yet did not deem it necessary at once completely to overthrow the minister in consequence of this divine threatening, is plain: the Prophet does not speak in a tone of command. We see however (xxxvi. 3) that Eliakim, two years later, had been advanced to this post, and Shebna transferred to another; whereby indeed the principal grievance against him was removed, the advancement, namely, of unworthy favourites.

1. (xxii. 15—19.)

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah of Hosts; Go, appear before this high official, before Shebna the chamberlain. "What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here, that thou hewest thyself out a tomb?" who hews out the height into his tomb, and hollows out in the rock a habitation for himself. Behold, Jehovah will dash thee away, a dashing, and pack thee away, a packing, rolling thee into a ball, roll thee a rolling, away into a wide land: there shalt thou die, and there thy lordly chariots, thou disgrace of thy Lord's house. Thus cast I thee from thy place, and from thy standing-place shall He destroy thee.

2. (xxii. 20—24).

But on that day I summon my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and clothe him with thy robe, and gird him with thy girdle; and thy authority I transfer to him, so that he shall be a father to the dwellers in Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah; and lay upon his shoulders the key of David's house; so that he opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens. And I fasten him as a nail in a sure place, so that he shall be a throne to his father's house: and on him hangs all the glory of his father's house, the offshoots and the blossoms, all the graceful vessels, as well the bowls as all ewers.

3. (xxii. 25.)

On that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, shall the nail fastened in a safe place give way; it is cut away and falls, and the burden which hangs from it is destroyed: for Jehovah has spoken it.

The very commencement (v. 15) shews the character of the address, Shebna being contemptuously spoken of as *this man.* And the first word to him asks the proud foreigner, what right and what ancestors he has here to entitle him to build a family tomb, as though he were a native, and to set too his eternal home at the top of a rock, as though he would look down proudly thence on the holy city! But even because thou, man, wilt fix thyself here against the divine will, He will pack thee off with strong hand, and rolling thee up into a ball, send thee like a light ball out of the Holy Land into a distant wide land; He will hurl thee into a wilderness, together with thy proud chariots (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 1), where thou, who bringest the royal house into contempt, shalt die. Then can, in the divine Mind, Eliakim be clothed with the official tokens of this high dignity,

to become a careful father for the whole country, (cf. ix. 6), and in the royal house exercise its full prerogative to open and shut, as only he who has the charge of the keys, the High Chamberlain, is entitled to do. And he, an irreproachable man and sprung from a noble house, shall not easily fall, but, like a nail hammered into a firm place, remain so fast in its position, that through his throne his whole family shall feel honoured; and to this nail all its members attach themselves, like a number of vessels to a strong wall nail, and are supported by it; even the more youthful members of the house, (Eliakim was doubtless already an old man), the shoots and the blossoms, like graceful vessels of all kinds, and humble as well as exalted members; the low flat bowls as well as the high ewers.

Thus figure is joined to figure: the figure of the nail is not altogether unusual, (cf. Zech. x. 4, Ezra ix. 8, 9). Unless the followers of the then minister, Shebna, had cherished such hopes, the Prophet would hardly thus have dwelt on beforehand in contrast the followers of his successor: but now he returns (v. 25) expressly to Shebna's followers; he stands at present as a nail fastened in a sure place, *i.e.* in the royal house of David, but shall soon with his whole load, which he has to carry, fall heavily to the ground.

It follows from v. 21, that the official dress of the premier was kept at that time in the royal palace, and passed on to his successor.

This fragment is also remarkable, in so far as it gives us a clearer insight into the relationship of the powerful parties in the existing kingdom.

In every kingdom, where, as in that of the ancient people of Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, not the caprice and arbitrary will of a king and royal house, but law and religion should rule supreme,

and in fact did rule there for centuries; the opposing tendencies naturally take different directions, according to the traditions of the ruling houses, and thus the friends of similar principles naturally ally themselves to the head of a powerful house.

On Tyre. (Ch. XXIII.)

The first fourteen verses form a chapter on Tyre, which is concluded in three strophes, and for its matter may belong to Isaiah's time. We know from Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 14), that Salmanassar conquered the whole main land of Phœnicia, and long besieged, though ultimately in vain, the island of Tyre: the Assyrians are here mentioned by name as the dangerous enemy (v. 13). At the very commencement of the march against Phœnicia a prophet may have thus spoken, and that the island of Tyre was not at length conquered in no way detracts from the true prophetic meaning and value of the prophecy. For what specially calls forth the righteous threatenings of the Prophet against Tyre, is the ambition, the pride, and the oppression of foreign countries, the three grand ruling sins of this merchant state, at that time standing at the summit of its power. The three strophes are directed against these three several sins. On the fall of so great power and glory the Prophet could mourn; and, in fact, the whole is rather a prophetic elegy on the certain ruin of the Phœnician sway, since each strophe either commences with a call for mourning, or, as befits the two last, closes with it; and, accordingly, the whole passage is a lamentation over Tyre, in reference—(1) to the ruin of her trade, (2) to that of her luxurious empire, and (3) to her lordship over foreign countries. But, as Prophet, he had to recognize the eternal necessity of the

fall of a power resting on such foundations, and to overcome the first human astonishment at this fall, in reflecting on the divine causes here at work. These follow unchangeable laws, and by these laws Tyre must sooner or later lose its power. Even though she lost it not at once, as the Prophet at that time foreboded; and though she recovered from the first blow, there was yet, as the later history has shewn, no sure foundation.

The style of the poetry is here finished to a high degree. As the whole poem takes the form of lamentation—the first and the second begin in this strain—so the first sound of this lamentation, coming from the proud ships of Tarshish, becomes the key-note of the whole: it recurs at the end of the first and second strophes. It is wanting indeed before verse 10, but must have there fallen out, for each of the three strophes has plainly five verses. Tarshish appropriately returns in a natural recurrence at the commencement of each strophe.

Whether however this prophet were Isaiah is very doubtful: it is true many of Isaiah's words and thoughts strike us here; but all the majesty and impetuous brevity of Isaiah are wanting. It would seem therefore as if a younger contemporary and pupil of Isaiah were the composer, like what must be assumed of chap. xxxiii.; and, as these pupils took much part in the writing out and preserving the prophecies of Isaiah, it is readily understood how some prophecies of the pupils could find their way into the same book. We might conjecture that the passage was not written till the siege by Nabukodnosor, but no sufficient ground can be adduced for this hypothesis. Not even the use of *Canaanites* for *merchants* (v. 8), (as in Prov. xxxi. 24, Job xi. 30,) which might be supposed a some-

what later usage, but, as against this, no other passage of this period is found in the whole book of Isaiah.

On the other hand, the concluding verses (15—18) belong neither to the time of Salmanassar, nor of Nabukodnosor, who for the second time, and for yet longer, besieged the island of Tyre. They foretel that Tyre should remain indeed for seventy years forgotten, therefore almost wholly destroyed and powerless, and should then recover part of her prosperity, but would at length use her worldly gains for the spiritual use of the true religion. This thought is inconsistent with the above prophecy of the destruction of the island fortress, to which such a vision of Tyre's restoration is wholly foreign.

Further, the former prophecy is complete in itself, and nothing in it leads up to such a conclusion as this. It must be assigned to a prophet at the commencement of the Persian times. For then, after the fall of the Chaldæan power, which lasted about seventy years, all the countries which had been kept down recovered themselves; Tyre also began a new period of fair prosperity. The round number seventy became established (cf. Zech. i. 12); and at that time, when the new Jerusalem was very poor and needy, but the Messianic hopes none the less highly excited, the hope and wish was natural that the wealth of Tyre should redound to the profit of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, when Tyre, like the other heathen nations, should turn to the true God. This seemed indeed now to be the necessary completion of the old prophecy, that Tyre should rise from its ruins and return to its old trade, for the divine end of labouring thus for the final welfare of God's kingdom. The language also points to this period. We have here consequently an appendix of like sort and date to that in chap. xii., and both are,

as well as was practicable, joined on to the older portions; the two doubtless come from the same hand.

Burden on Tyre. 1. (XXIII. 1—5.)

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is destroyed, so that there is no house, no going in! From the land of the Chittim it is announced to them.

Be silent, ye inhabitants of the coast! whom Sidon's sea-traversing merchantmen supplied, whose profit was the seed of the Nile, the stream's harvest upon many waters, so that she became a mart of the nations.

Blush, Sidon, for the sea, the sea's fortress, spake thus: I travail not, nor have brought forth children; I have not brought up youths, nor educated maidens.

When the news comes to Egypt they shall tremble there, when the news from Tyre—

2. (XXIII. 6—9.)

Pass over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the coast! Is this then for you, the jovial city, whose origin dates from the earliest time, whose feet carry her far off to sojourn. Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city; whose merchants were princes, her traffickers the honourable of the earth? Jehovah of Hosts has taken this counsel, to stain the pride of that glory, to humble all the honourable of the earth!

[Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your fortress is laid waste!]

3. (XXIII. 10—14.)

Pass over the land like the Nile, thou daughter of Tarshish; there is no bridle more! He stretched his hand over the sea, he made kingdoms tremble. Jehovah commanded concerning Canaan to destroy its fortresses; and said, Thou shalt exult no

more, thou disgraced daughter of Sidon: pass over to the Chittim, even there shalt thou find no rest.

Behold the land of the Canaanites!* this people is no more; Assyria has made it into a wilderness. They set up their towers, they built their palaces; he has laid it in ruins!

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your fortress is laid waste!

4. (XXIII. 15—18.)

Yet on that day, then shall Tyre be forgotten seventy years, like the years of a king: after seventy years it shall happen to Tyre, as in the song on the harlot.

Take a harp, go through the city, thou forgotten harlot!
Play well, sing well, that thou mayest be remembered!

For after seventy years shall Jehovah visit Tyre, so that she shall return to her trade, and she shall play the harlot with all nations of the earth. But her profit and her earnings shall be consecrated to Jehovah, not withdrawn nor laid up; but the profit comes to the dwellers before God, to eat to the full, and for grand clothing.

Howl, be silent for horror, blush and tremble, shall all which nearly or remotely is connected with the welfare of the over-rich Tyre. The Prophet then turns his eyes around to take in the whole prospect. (1) The mighty ships of Tarshish are to mourn, for to them on their journey from Tartessus in Spain is announced, in the land of the Chittim, (*i. e.* in Cyprus, that strong outwork of Phœnicia,) the sad intelligence that all is destroyed to the ground, without any house, any going in, being left, where they might find shelter. There shall be astonishment among the inhabitants of the strong isle of Tyre, filled by the far-sailing merchants, especially by the

* For כשדים read כנענים.

rich trade in Egyptian corn; it was a mart for all nations. All Sidon shall blush (*i. e.* the whole Sidonian Phœnician alliance), since its strongest fortress, the island of Tyre, has been laid waste; and the sea therefore, or rather *the sea's fortress*, cries out in lamentations that she has been laid waste, seen all her children cut off. Egypt in particular shall tremble when it hears the tidings from Tyre: with which somewhat carelessly expressed sentence the first strophe well closes.

(2) In the first strophe, for human lamentation, the causes were hardly referred to, the covetousness is only remotely touched on. But now, when the Prophet sees in spirit the flight of the Tyrians to their remote colonies, as their second offence, luxury and pride are more plainly alleged. From that proud ancient city, which assigned the crowns of remote cities and countries, whose merchants were like princes and kings (cf. Jer. xxv. 22), they must now shamefully escape; and when, in wonder, enquiry is made after the cause and the author of the calamity, the Prophet replies, that Jehovah was the prime Author, and not without cause; her assumption must, like all earthly pride, be bowed down.

(3) And further, her oppression of foreign countries and distant lands must be punished. Tartessus, spread thyself over thy land, free from vexatious restrictions; there is no longer a bridle in Tyre's hand to keep thee in check. Jehovah, stretching His arm over the sea, has shaken distant empires through commanding the destruction of the Phœnician fort. The hitherto unconquered, but now conquered and disgraced, Phœnician virgin Tyre shall no longer exult as hitherto, but flee, first to Cyprus, there likewise to find no rest. The writers of ch. xlvii. 1—5, and Nahum iii. 5—7, had no doubt this

passage before them. The reason of Tyre finding no rest in Cyprus is given at the close in the words of the people of that island: the country and people of the Phœnicians, they say, is all but destroyed by the Assyrians, with all its beautiful garden towers and palaces (cf. xxxii. 14): howl then, ye ships, as was said in v. 1. That at v. 15, the seventy years are explained by *the days of a king, i.e.* so long as a king can live or reign, seems to have been suggested by the long reign of Nabukodnosor, who besides was early taken as the type of the whole Chaldee rule.

The figure here, to represent a large heathen merchant city, of a harlot, is foreign not only to the preceding prophecy, but even to the whole age of Isaiah: it is first found in Nahum iii. 4. But here it was capable of a most telling application. As an old harlot cannot well give up her trade, and though punished for a time, so soon as she recovers the power, returns to her gainful commerce; so shall Tyre also, after being long forgotten, so soon as Jehovah visits her with His saving grace, return to her beloved trade of seduction and commerce with all nations, as it was expressed in that well-known satirical song on the old harlot. But the wealth thus won shall not again be heaped up for so long and so enormously as by ancient Tyre, but shall soon, through her conversion, fall to the benefit of the poor of the holy city, who have now hardly enough to eat and clothe themselves becomingly. (Cf. ch. xi. 9, xxii. 23, lx. 9—12.)

BOOK V.

THE FIFTH WORK OF ISAIAH.

Chh. XXVIII., XXXII.

THIS long discourse is complete in itself, a passage equally important and wide reaching.

The time of its delivery is defined by the commencement (vv. 1—6). Samaria was not yet destroyed, but was plainly much threatened, and visibly approaching its overthrow. The Assyrians pressed hard on Jerusalem, in, that is, their exaction of contributions; but they are not described here, as later, as robbers and plunderers; nor blamed for having exceeded God's intentions in using them as His instruments: rather, their overspreading the land and besieging Jerusalem is spoken of as something yet future.

At this time then it was in serious contemplation by many of the great men, in terror at the growing power of the Assyrians, and in order to escape the tribute, to form an alliance with Egypt against Assyria, as Egypt gladly welcomed such alliances.

That Isaiah was opposed to such alliances, was known to these rulers; they, consequently, did not ask counsel of him and of the other true prophets (xxix. 15, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1), but rather sought

to crush every true prophet who plainly spoke the truth (xxix. 21, xxx. 9—11).

They found, however, prophets and priests of the Lord with less conscience, who spoke and did for them all they wanted, with whose help they spread a covering of sanctity over their projects, and thought to escape all danger of the future. Their ambassadors were already on their way to Egypt (xxx. 6), and, thinking themselves safe, they gave themselves up with their abettors to unmeasured feasting and other follies (xxviii. 7, 8).

But, much as Isaiah might deplore the corrupting rule of the Assyrians, he saw not less clearly that an alliance with Egypt would be useless and injurious, because it resulted from want of faith and spiritual strength. Firm as a rock remained his conviction that in Jehovah alone is safety and deliverance: and as in the sanctuary of Zion he saw the symbol of this imperishable religion, the conviction was strong that Zion would indeed be straitly besieged by the Assyrians, as Samaria was then; but that in its lowest condition it would retain an imperishable force, and be redeemed by God at the commencement of the new and better time. And thus the Prophet, while contending with false hopes, and while threatening false prophets and their adherents, could yet, as at that time was equally necessary, strengthen the confidence of waverers, and promise the best consolation.

With these views Isaiah went boldly into the assembly of the great men and false prophets in their feasting; dashed to the ground as well their resolve as their whole view of life and the future; and set forth to the rebuke of one side, the comfort of the other, his own view. We may also safely assume that he had no small

part in the frustration of the league with Egypt; although the desire for it lasted on in Jerusalem with many, and was so publicly acknowledged as to have become known to the Assyrians (xxxvi. 6). This harangue was delivered first orally, and soon after was committed to writing (xxx. 8). It contains no narrative, for it was written down while the event was fresh in the minds of all: it completes what the Prophet in that encounter with his opponents had not been able to bring forward: it lets us see in the clearest way in what manner, with him, the oral and the writing work were related. No other writing of the Prophet goes into one great question arising from the heat of the times, and treats it with the same surpassing mastery in all its bearings, as does this. In what manner he on that day had surprised the drunken men, demolished their plans and hopes, and set forth the truths of God; of this he gives the most graphic picture in two parts, quite alike in form and contents; and in a third portion of five strophes repeats all that then remained to be said: one last single strophe, on the righteous judgment upon the luxurious women, brings the conclusion. This writing of the Prophet was plainly at once circulated in a separate form, without a heading; and indeed this was superfluous in a writing whose authorship every reader at each word would at once recognize.

The Drunkenness and Perverseness of the Leaders of the People. (Chap. XXVIII.)

In order to combat the drunken thoughtless prophets and their followers, Isaiah does not begin at once with them and their folly: he begins with something apparently wide of the subject, inveighing against the mad thoughtlessness of the great men of Samaria, who

while their kingdom was plainly hurrying to its fall, drowned thought in giddy revels of all sorts.

This invective against Samaria was doubtless not heard without pleasure by the people of Jerusalem: but hardly had they begun to listen to Isaiah's discourse, when he in a sudden transition turns his sharp rebukes against themselves; especially against the false prophets and priests, as well as the other leaders, as drunken and thoughtless, and, what was worse, revilers of the voice of truth; who, in just punishment for this sin against the Holy Ghost, should soon be themselves fearfully scorned and troubled by Him whom they now scorn. The prophetic fire burns then less fiercely, but soon breaks forth again in the contest with these adversaries, holding forth the true picture of the future which awaited them against their false pretence and undertakings, till the harangue, which commenced so stormily in the second and again in the third strophe, subsides to a strain all the softer, in order to teach the already vanquished opponents that there must be a measure in all things.

There are therefore four strophes of nearly equal length, only that the introductory one is somewhat shorter, and seems suddenly broken off at the end.

1. (XXVIII. 1—6.)

O proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, and withering flower of its glorious beauty, at the head of the rich valley of those knocked down by wine! Behold, a mighty and strong one hath the Lord, as it were a hailstone, a crashing tempest, as it were a storm of strong overflowing waters, he throws them to the earth with His fist! With the feet shall they be trodden down, the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim; and the withering flower of its glorious beauty, which is at the head of

the rich valley, shall be as an early fig before the summer, which some one sees: hardly is it in his hand he eats it up. On that day shall Jehovah of Hosts be a crown of beauty, and a diadem of honour to the residue of His people, and a spirit of justice to those sitting for judgment, and strength to those who drive back the combat to the gate.

2. (XXVIII. 7—13.)

But even here with wine they were giddy, and with strong drink they reeled; and priest and prophet were giddy with strong drink, were overcome with wine, reeled with strong drink, were giddy in the prophecy, staggered in judgment! Yea, all tables are full of filthy vomit, so that there is no room left! Whom teaches he wisdom, and to whom does he announce a revelation? those weaned from milk, taken from the breasts: so that precept should be on precept, precept on precept; rule on rule, rule on rule, shortly here, shortly there! Yea, with stammering words and with another tongue shall he speak to this people. He who said to them, This is the resting-place, give rest to the weary, and this is the refreshing, but they would not hear. Jehovah's word then shall be to them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept; rule upon rule, rule upon rule; soon here, soon there; in order that they may go backwards, and break their limbs, and get snared and taken.

3. (XXVIII. 14—21.)

Therefore hear Jehovah's word, ye men of mockery, rulers of this people which is in Jerusalem: Because ye think, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we have made a vision; the overflowing scourge when it comes on shall not find us; because we have made lies our refuge, and hide ourselves in falsehood: therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, Behold, I have established in Zion a stone, a tried precious corner

stone of firmest foundation: he who holds it fast shall not fly. And I make judgment the rule, and righteousness the balance: so that hail knocks down the refuge of lies, the waters overflowed the refuge of deceit: and your covenant with death is broken off, and your oracle with hell lasts not; the overflowing scourge, when it comes on, ye shall be for it to crush. So often as it comes it shall take you away: for every morning shall it come, by day and by night; it shall be simple horror to receive a revelation. For the bed is too short to stretch oneself, and the covering too narrow to gather oneself up. For as at mount Perazim shall Jehovah rise up, as in the valley of Gideon be wroth, to do His work, His strange work, and to do His deed, His unheard-of deed.

4. (XXVIII. 22—29.)

Now then play not the mocker, lest your bands be made strong! for an end and sentence have I heard from the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, upon the whole earth. Give ear, and hear my voice; attend, and listen to my saying. Doth the ploughman plough continually in order to sow, open and break his soil? When he hath smoothed its surface, doth he not then scatter the dill or sow cummin, and put wheat into the best land, and barley into the rough, and spelt in its border? Thus God teaches him judgment, his God instructs him. But the dill must not be threshed with a roller, nor a waggon wheel be drawn over the cummin; but dill is beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Grain is threshed;* for not for ever is it only threshed, and the wheel of his waggon brought over it and his horses, it is not threshed to nothing. This also is from Jehovah of Hosts: He has wonderful counsel, great wisdom.

(1) Samaria the glorious beauty, or the proud royal seat, the

* For יודק read יודש.

glory and crown of Ephraim, lies on a mountain, which, even in an earthly sense, stands forth as a fair garland over a rich fruitful valley: and these drunken men also are fond of sitting garlanded at table: the proud great men of Ephraim are constantly like drunkards. The language has reference both to the garlands on the heads of the drunken Ephraimites, and to the situation of the Capital. The garland on the head of the drunkard sways with him from side to side, and probably falls in the dust: the flowers of the showy garland at the head of the rich valley are already withered, ready to fall: both kinds of garland then can easily be snatched off, and Jehovah has already a mighty one in readiness (the Assyrian), who, like a crushing devastating hailstorm, with strong hand, through the conquest of Samaria casts to the ground the garlands of both kinds; he who swallows greedily the tempting royal city, like an early fig. (Cf. Hosea ix. 10; Micah vii. 1—2; Mark xi. 13.)

But the day on which this is to happen is not a day of simple calamity: it shall, in the divine thought and plan, be the beginning of that better time in which Jehovah shall be to the reformed alone among His people the true glory and the kingly decoration; to the sitter on the judgment-seat the spirit not of wrong, as now in Samaria, but of justice, and their true strength to the noble warriors, who drive back the enemy's attack to his own city and his own gate; where all therefore, differing as they do in calling and employment, are yet led on to the like happy end by the same God.

(2) But drunken and reeling, likewise, are the great men of Judæa, especially those who should be the most sober and temperate: priests and prophets drink and are drunk in the midst of their prophecies and of their sittings in court: let one but go into their

assemblies, and see there the unlimited gluttony and filthiness. But, with the closing words of v. 8, so graphically does Isaiah bring the scene before us as he had witnessed it, we hear the verse and discourse suddenly interrupted, other broken voices interrupt him: hardly can, in fact, a true prophet come near them to declare the truth, than they deride him and the divine word; ask him whether they then are unweaned children, people quite without knowledge, that he would teach them,—them, the grown-up wise men and self-styled wise prophets: they deride the many repetitions of his excited address in v. 7; mimicking him, and at the same time only able to speak for drunkenness in really half-stammering sounds; and thus would let him know what a miserable schoolmaster, almost stuttering for over-zeal, is he; that he always and everywhere is finding something to blame and correct; constantly, with only the rule and measuring-line (*i.e.* with incessant corrections), would stun them, never leave them rest; soon find something to blame here, soon somewhere else! With such derisive mocking (cf. lvii. 4) would they confuse and annoy the true Prophet, and have done with the word of truth and the correcting God.

As a just punishment, with stammering, confusing words, and with a wholly new language, Jehovah, who would have shewn them the place of rest, and urged them to give rest to the weary, shall now give them back their mimicking mockery, namely, through the voice of thunder and of immediate punishment; so that they who would confuse Him should themselves fall in confusion and be lost. This is further explained in the next strophe, vv. 18—22.

(3) But the Prophet now takes a calmer tone, and it is wonderful with what calm collectedness he appeals to them: hear on therefore

more calmly what Jehovah now says. I will reveal to you your innermost thought, which you wish to cover up, and tell you what God replies to it. You think through lies and deceit (*i. e.* through a treaty with Egypt, hidden from God and the light,) to make yourselves safe against all national danger, in face of the coming scourge of divine chastisements overflowing the country (cf. Job ix. 23): nay, yet more, you think, in prospect of the deadly danger, feared even by you, to have provided for your own safety, trusting to black arts and oracles, through which you hope to turn this danger and death to your own advantage. But Jehovah has long ago placed another stone for refuge, namely, the Sanctuary in Zion, that ancient tried precious corner-stone of surest foundation, and the belief on the true God honoured therein; so that whoever lays fast hold of it, believing in it, he shall not fly when threatened by calamity; but in the midst of the danger gain a firm footing and an impregnable fortress (cf. viii. 14, xxix. 1—8). But as to what the false prophets and their adherents think to have gained, that will be found worthless: judgment and righteousness alone will He take for the rule and balance of all the deeds of men; and the hail-storm and flood, before threatened on Samaria, shall carry away your refuge, dissolve your covenant with death, inaugurated by the prophets; so that you shall serve rather for the trampling down of that dreaded scourge, the Assyrian. Nay, so often as the divine punishment in the time of the great decision comes on, and with ceaseless blows shall it come on, it shall take you up and cast you down: the voice of prophecy, coming then with each blow, shall not be a mockery but a terror; for, as is said in that proverb of the bed and its covering, one shall feel then everywhere straitened and

cold, nowhere find rest: for the rising up of Jehovah in His wrath shall be as fearful as any in ancient story, when He rose up against the Canaanites to punish, in order to finish an unheard-of work. The language in v. 19 leads us to think of something greater than the Assyrian invasion.

(2) And once more—and now, if possible, yet more calmly—Isaiah advises them not to scoff: that the bands of calamity with which they are already bound may not become too firmly fastened ever to come off, for the trial and destruction of wicked doers on the whole earth is determined by Jehovah; there is nothing to jest and scoff at! Rather let them once more hear him: he will give them some parables taken from the common work of the husbandman, and leave them, the wise rulers of the Capital, to find out the application. If they only look at the daily labours of the husbandman in its two principal all-embracing departments, sowing and reaping, it is easily seen that he does nothing without its right method and measure: he does not plough and harrow incessantly in order on some future day to sow: he sows also at the right time, and sows everything at the right place; the wheat in the best land, the barley in the worse rough land, the spelt somewhere near these, in an intermediate soil: and so with the harvest, he proceeds not in an unreasoning manner, does not, *e.g.*, thresh the smaller finer grain, but beats it out more carefully with a staff, and does not in the rough manner draw the roller over them; not even over the larger grain does he keep always drawing it, for he would thus crush and lose everything. The simple countryman does this, taught by God himself order and measure: but will you, the great and wise, have no measure, but live on in your barren thoughtless life? Rather is it

the one thing right and necessary to trust continually also in the more hidden and difficult matters on God, and think on His works revealed in history, and let oneself be led by Him.

Isaiah however leaves to them this application, in order not to fall back into upbraiding, and concludes quite calmly with the remark, that this wisdom also comes from Him who has infinite wisdom, and imparts it to him who looks to Him.

The Truth on the Future, as a Riddle, and as a Fact.

Chh. XXIX. 1, XXX. 7.

How changed the end of the former passage from its commencement! it seems as though the same hearers, who at first, as in drunken arrogance and derision, rose against the Prophet's word, now, through the irresistible power and truth of the same word, had become more and more quiet and serious, and were already listening in all stillness and sober attention to that same word of God which they before could never enough contemn. But hardly were they brought so far, when the Prophet begins from a quite different side, but which only completes what had been already said: he sets forth his own intuition, and the divine truth, concerning the future. At first, however, his whole thought on the future and its necessary development compresses itself into a single image and a brief description: the underlying thought is however comprised in one single new name, which, as a symbol, contains in germ the whole of what follows.

This is the name Ariel, *i.e.* the Lion of God, the Lion through God strong and combative. The true revelation of the whole future of Zion (for Zion is meant) is here set forth; how, namely, it may be attacked and severely straitened by strong enemies, eager for

destruction (the Assyrians), and actually, in one or two years (xxix. 1, 17, xxxii. 10), would be hard beset; but the more threatening the danger, the more would she approve herself the invincible Lioness of God, the more mightily and speedily delivered by Jehovah, as Israel once was through His help in Egypt. To excite their attention to this new picture of the true solution of the riddle of the future, and, once more in passing, to shew the folly of the false prophets, for whom this truth is too high; he propounds to them as a riddle the wonderful history of Ariel and its divine strength and deliverance: he sees his meaning is utterly lost on them, they become dumbfounded. After then, in the first strophe, the mysterious oracle had been declared, and in a second, the stupid wondering of the false prophets properly rebuked; the Prophet proceeds to explain the riddle. This he does by rebuking the dulness, the obstinacy, and false confidence of those who, now despairing of Zion and of Jehovah, secretly turn to Egypt for help; instead of trusting to God, who would help them in a different way from what these men think. But hardly has the Prophet begun to speak in this sense on the real authors of the previous project, when his heart impels him, in the third strophe, to turn to comfort the multitude, who in this matter were less to blame; so that the rebuke, in all its plainness and severity, is kept for the fourth strophe.

And thus the plan of this whole section, with all its variety of matter, still, as well in its four strophes as in its whole development, is similar to the preceding. This, like that, begins in the first strophe with an apparently foreign matter, but only to fall with the more fury, in the second, on those at whom it was aimed, and at length, in the two last, to exhaust the thought.

1. (xxix. 1—8.)

O Lioness of God, Lioness of God, city where David encamped! add year to year; let the feasts come round. There shall I distress the Lioness of God, that she may become sighing and sighs: yet she shall be to me as the Lioness of God. For I encamp like a circle around thee, and draw a wall around thee, and set up bulwarks against thee. Then shalt thou speak deep out of the ground, and thy words whimper from the dust: thy voice shall be like a spirit's from the earth, and from the dust shall thy words chirp. But like fine dust shall be the multitude of thine enemies, and like flying chaff the multitude of the mighty ones; and of a sudden shall it happen, suddenly. By Jehovah of Hosts shall she be visited, with a roar and thunder and great noise, storm and tempest, and a flame of devouring fire. And as a dream, a vision of the night, shall be the multitude of all the heathen which camp against the Lioness of God, and all who war with it and its fortress, and distress it. Now as when the hungry man dreams he eats, and awakes and his appetite is unfilled; and as when the thirsty man dreams he drinks, and awakes and finds himself faint and his soul is longing: so shall the multitude of all the heathen be who fight against mount Zion.

2. (xxix. 9—14.)

Grow astonished and wonder, grow blind and see not: they are drunken, but without wine; they stagger, but not through strong drink. For Jehovah has poured on you a spirit of stupefaction, and your eyes hath He closed, [the prophets*] and covered your seers' heads: so that the vision of it all is become like words of the sealed book, which they give to the literary

* This word is probably a later addition, as it here interferes with the thread of discourse.

man, saying, Pray read this! but he says, I cannot, because it is sealed: or as when a book is given to an illiterate man, saying, Pray read this! and he saith, I do not understand books. Thus then saith the Lord, Because this people draw nigh to me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart goes far from me, so that their fear towards me became learned human ordinances; therefore shall I further deal wonderfully with this people, wonderfully and a wonder: so that the wisdom of its wise men shall perish, and the prudence of its prudent men hide itself.

3. (xxix. 14—24.)

O those who would hide deep their counsel from Jehovah, that their deeds may be in darkness, and say, Who sees us, and who knows us? Your perverseness! or shall it be deemed as the potter's clay, that a work should say of its maker, He has not made me; and an image should say of its sculptor, He understands it not! Yet a little, a little while, and Lebanon returns to the fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for the forest: and on that day the deaf hear the words of a book; and out of obscurity and darkness the eyes of blind men see; and the meek have greater joy in Jehovah, and the poor among men exult in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant vanishes, and the scorner has come to an end, and all the watchers after vanity are cut off, who condemn men for a word, and set nets for him who reproveth in the public place, and through lies overthrow the righteous. Therefore thus saith Jehovah to the house of Jacob, He who redeemed Abraham: From that time Jacob shall no more blush, and his face no more grow pale: but when he discerns his children as the work of my hands in his midst, they shall sanctify my Name, sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and reverence the God of Israel; and the erring in spirit shall understand prudence, and hardened men learn instruction.

4. (xxx. 1—7.)

O refractory sons, saith Jehovah, to execute a counsel, and not from me, and to weave a web without my spirit, to heap sins on sins!

Who go down to Egypt without having asked at my mouth, to strengthen themselves in the fortress of Pharaoh, and flee into the shadow of Egypt! therefore shall Pharaoh's fortress be to you for shame, and the flight into Egypt's shadow your disgrace. Though his princes might be in Tanis, and his ambassadors reach Hanes, each one blushes for a people which cannot help nor profit, but be a shame and also a scorn. [Burden of the beasts* of the South.] Through a land of trouble and distress, whence come lioness and lion, adder and flying serpent, they carry their goods on the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures on the bunches of camels, to people who profit not. And Egypt help in vain and to no purpose; therefore name I this, *Rahab means to sit.*

(1) The meaning of the strange name was to be apparent from the beginning; hence the place is defined in v. 1 as that were David once encamped, in the time when he was yet engaged in constant wars, but not until the concluding verse of the strophe does the name appear, as a sudden surprise; although through the strophe there had been a leading up to it. The riddle is announced in the two first verses: the following point out its meaning with continually increasing clearness. First then, quite briefly, let but a year pass; the feasts once more come round, and I shall so distress the Lioness of God that she shall be nothing but mourning, with nothing of a Lioness of God left in her: but even then shall she be to me the true Lioness of God, approve herself unconquerable. For,

* The words in v. 6 plainly do not come from Isaiah.

as it goes on, it is God Himself who by the Assyrians is beleaguering her, as they must see in this, that when they are reduced to extremity, and can hardly whimper with hollow spirit-like voice, suddenly (the Prophet then looking forward in hope to their conversion) all their enemies are driven away like chaff: for Jehovah Himself shall visit them, as aforetime Israel in Egypt, and visit those barbarians who would overthrow the Holy Sanctuary; and scatter them as a dream which troubles but does not injure (cf. Ps. lxxiii. 20). Their greed to destroy mount Zion, far otherwise than in xxviii. 4, shall be disappointed, as with him who only in a dream has quieted his appetite.

(2) The Prophet sees his former antagonists astonished at the strange discourse and dumbfounded. But, with sudden calmness and wonderful power, he suddenly turns this astonishment against themselves, and sees therein but a new proof of the same folly with which he had already had to reproach them. Yes, be astonished and blush as much as you will! here they stagger and are stupefied, through something quite different from the usual wine (cf. xxviii. 7). For Jehovah himself has deprived you of the seeing eye, and instead of the true prophetic spirit, has poured a spirit of stupefaction upon you, so that you now have no power to understand a true prophecy like that which I just now propounded to you; as though all prophecy were to you like the contents of a sealed book (Rev. v. 1—3), or indeed as though you were such as cannot read any book (cf. xix. 14). But, because the whole people of that period were led astray by such prophets, even when as now it appears before Jehovah, and comes before His Sanctuary with offerings (cf. i. 12), and thinks to honour Him, while they in their inmost heart are gone far astray

from Him, and their whole fear towards Him is no pure impulse of the heart and free cheerful resolve, but merely learned human precepts, imitation of the laws and usages, prescribed beforetime by priests and prophets: on this ground would Jehovah once more, as in ancient time, treat the people most wonderfully (as *i. e.* was said in the previous strophe), that the wisdom of its worldly wise men may be confounded.

(3) But the Prophet now proceeds to rebuke in plain language the authors of this Egyptian scheme, so foolish and perverse as to think they could keep their plans secret from God, to suppose that the creature could surpass in ability and knowledge its Creator. The Prophet then turns to a prospect of terror for these worldly rulers, of comfort for the meek and pious among God's people; when the present state of things shall be completely changed; when, as is said figuratively, Lebanon shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a forest. (The antithesis here is the same as in Psalm cxxxii. 15.) That change would be enough to make deaf men hear and blind men see (in reference also to the spiritually deaf and blind). The tyrant then (the Assyrian) vanishes, and the scoffer also, with those who lay wait to entrap God's prophets and other righteous men. Let the house of Jacob then trust the promise of Him who redeemed Abraham; that his grandson, the patriarch Jacob, who now from his glory may look with sadness and shame on his descendants, when he sees his descendants in honour shall no more blush; and not only shall he bless his Holy One, but on seeing the honour done to his race, men shall bless the Holy One of Jacob, and deeply fear the God of Israel; those of erring spirit shall learn true wisdom, and the hardened accept salutary instruction.

(4) But it is time to return to the rulers. That the plan they are carrying out, the web they are weaving, will be fruitless; that Egypt will not help them, follows—first, because the plan is conceived in opposition to Jehovah, and the conclusion therefore can only bring them shame; though Egypt were indeed so great and strong, though it embraced Northern Egypt with Tanis, then the royal residence, and central Egypt with Hanes (by Herodotus ii. 137 named Ἄνυσις, now Ehnes). For, secondly, the Egyptian character should lead them to expect boastful promises, but nothing more; for that country, which in Hebrew is styled *Rahab* or *commotion*, might better be named *Shebeth, sitting still.* What folly then to carry through the horrors of the desert their rich gifts to such a people! Thus the Prophet, who had begun with such terrible seriousness, ends humorously, and leaves his witty remark time to work its way. Observe the fitness with which the Prophet, who had commenced with Ariel and its Protector, closes with Rahab as its antithesis.

Further Forebodings and Warnings. (Ch. xxx. 8—xxxii. 8.)

The Prophet, who had felt impelled by the Divine Spirit to speak thus far in public, now hears the same voice saying to him, "Go home now, and write it in a book." His opponents were silenced for a time, but he knew only for a time; he would therefore write it down, that when time had proved the truth of his words, it might be found recorded as a witness for ever: but in the retirement of his home he can express himself more fully and unreservedly. He breaks forth, in the first strophe, in righteous indignation against those who scoffed at God's prophets, but soon,

in the second and third strophes, turns in comforting words to set before the people the peace and blessedness of Messiah's Kingdom, with the certain downfall of the Assyrian. In the fourth strophe he breaks out once more against the rulers, and in the fifth contrasts rulers as they should be with those they had at present.

1. (xxx. 8—17.)

Now go home and write it on a board before them, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be a witness* to a later day for ever. For it is a refractory people, sons who disown (their father), sons who would not hear Jehovah's instruction: who say to the seers, Ye shall not see; and to the prophets, Ye shall not prophesy to us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get ye out of the way, turn aside from the path, allow to rest before us the Holy One of Israel! Therefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in violent and crooked ways, and stay therein, therefore shall this transgression be to you like a falling breach swelling out on a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant: and it shall break, as when a fragment of a potter's vessel is mercilessly dashed to pieces, and there is not found among its fragments a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or draw water from the cistern. For thus spake the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel: In rest and quiet shall ye be saved, in peace and in confidence shall be your strength; but ye would not: and said, Nay, but we will fly upon the fleet; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall your pursuers be swift. One thousand at the threat of one, at the threat of five shall ye flee, till ye be left as a mast on the mountain-top, and as a signal on the hill.

* Ver. 8, for לָעַד read לְעֵד.

2. (xxx. 18—26.)

And therefore doth Jehovah wait to be gracious to you, and therefore doth He not move* to shew compassion on you: for Jehovah is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him. For thou, people which dwellest in Zion, in Jerusalem, weep, weep not! gracious, He will be gracious to thee at the sound of thy crying; when He hears thee He has answered thee. But should the Lord give thee bread of affliction and water of affliction, thy teachers shall no more hide themselves, but thine eyes shall constantly see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear words behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left. Then defilest thou the covering of thy silver graven image, and the shrine of thy golden molten image, thou shalt abominate it as a disgusting thing; Get out, shalt thou say to it. Then gives He rain for thy seed, with which thou shalt sow the ground, and bread of the produce of the ground, and it shall be nourishing and fat. Thy cattle shall feed on that day in a wide pasture; and the bullocks which plough the ground eat salted mixed fodder which has been winnowed with the fan and the shovel.

And on every high mountain and on every elevated hill shall be streams of running water on the day of the great slaughter when towers fall. Then shall the pale moonlight be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun is sevenfold, like the light of seven days, in the day of Jehovah's binding up His people's wound, and healing the hurt of its stroke.

3. (xxx. 26—33.)

Behold, Jehovah's name comes from far, His anger burning and with heavy uprising, His lips full of wrath, and His tongue like devouring fire, while His breath is as an overflowing stream

* Ver. 18, for ירום read ידום.

which reaches to the neck, to sift heathen with the sieve of deception, and a misleading bit is in the jaws of the nations. Your song shall be as in the night of the solemnizing a feast, and joy of heart, as he who goeth with flutes to the fortress of Jehovah, to the rock of Israel: and Jehovah makes be heard His glorious thunder, and shews the lighting down of His arm, in fury of anger and flame of devouring fire, crashing and tempest and hailstones. Yea, before the thunder of Jehovah shall Assyria quake, before* the staff with which He smites: and so often as there but passes over him the rod of the destiny which Jehovah lays upon him, they shall with tabrets and lyres, and in battles with sacrifices, contend with them. Long since has the pile been prepared, even it for the king is prepared deep and broad; its capacity for fire and wood is great: Jehovah's breath, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.

4. (xxxi. 1—9.)

O those who go down to Egypt for help, and stay themselves upon horses, and trust upon troopers because they are very many, and on horsemen because they are very numerous, without looking to the Holy One of Israel, and without seeking Jehovah! Yet he also is wise, and announced evil, and has never altered his words; but rises against the house of evil-doers and against the help of workers of iniquity. But the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit; and Jehovah will stretch out His hand, so that the helper stumbles and the holpen falls, and together they all perish. For thus said Jehovah to me, Even as roars the lion, and the young lion over his prey, against whom the full body of shepherds is called: at their noise he trembles not, nor abases himself before their uproar: so shall Jehovah of Hosts come

* Ver. 31, read משבט for בשבט.

down with His host upon mount Zion and upon its hill. Like flying birds, so shall Jehovah of Hosts protect Jerusalem, protect it and deliver, pass over and rescue it. O return to Him whom they have deeply injured, ye sons of Israel! For on that day shall they cast away, each one, his idols of silver and his idols of gold which your hands made to you for guilt. And Assyria falls through the sword of no *man*, and no *mortal's* sword shall consume it; he flees away before the sword, and his warriors become tributaries; and he fails of his rock for fear, and his princes are frightened away from the standard, saith Jehovah, who has a fire in Zion and a hearth in Jerusalem.

5. (XXXII. 1—8.)

Behold, the ruler shall rule in righteousness, and the commanders, they shall command with moderation; so that each one is as a hiding-place from the storm and a shelter from the tempest; like streams of water in the desert, like the shadow of a mighty rock in a thirsty land. And the eyes of seeing men are then not closed, the ears of hearing men are sharpened; and the heart of the rash has wise prudence, and the tongue of the stammerers speaks readily and clearly. The fool is no longer called liberal, nor the mischief-maker called estimable: for a fool speaks villainy, and his heart prepares evil; to act unholily and speak folly against Jehovah; to make famish the soul of the hungry, and remove the drink of the thirsty.

And a mischief-maker, his tools are evil; he counsels to crimes, to destroy the poor with lying words, and with making lawsuits for the helpless: but the noble counsels liberal things, and he on liberal things shall stand.

(1) The Prophet had just now in his discourse expressed his certainty that Egypt would not help. The rulers would not believe this, but Isaiah is certain of it from God, and receives now the

command from above to write on a table this utterance, at his home, that short obscure saying, namely, at the conclusion, in the presence of those who now would not believe it; and write down all the rest in a book, that both records may serve for later times, after the fulfilment, for an eternal evidence of the prophetic truth. (Compare the similar double records, ch. viii. 1—16.)

But they are even now (and here return the thoughts of the earlier severe rebuke, ch. i.) refractory sons, who disown their God and benefactor, who actually cannot bear the true prophetic utterance, because it sets the Holy One before their eyes, and wish that the true prophets either did not speak at all, or would take another line. But they must be told from God that this contempt of the prophetic word, and their dishonest violence in the government, should issue at last in their utter ruin; just as certainly as a breach in a high wall, long perhaps concealed, spreads deeper and swells outward, till suddenly it brings the whole wall down in utter ruin; as when a poor man's earthen pot is smashed, so that not even a sherd is left for the most necessary purposes of life. For this long time He counselled to you, as the one ready means of deliverance, peace, collectedness, and trust in Him: but ye will have unrest and pride, will hunt upon horses from Egypt (cf. Hos. xiv. 3); so shall ye now run before your enemies the Assyrians, and fall shamefully, till ye are left as alone in the land, as a mark standing solitary on a mountain. But next we have—

(2) The sad condition of suspense, from the impossibility for Jehovah, much as He would wish it, to save at once: yet, as righteous, He cannot for ever suffer the great wrongs now dominant on the earth through the Assyrians; already He is preparing to reinstate

the right, and help the pious poor: but whether the deliverer comes early or late, blessed are all who wait patiently for Him! The way is thus prepared for comfort to the true-hearted. For, in any case (thus does the discourse soar upward, and tremble as it were, with the glow of blessed hope, which here, for the first time, breaks forth unchecked), thou, people in Zion, shalt not perish when in repentance and humility thou callest upon thy God: but, even in the deepest trouble, though the Lord give thee for bread and water nothing but distress, *i.e.* in the siege (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 27), then shall He who now hides himself from you, and whom ye see not, be felt here present with you, you shall constantly see and hear Him, and consequently cast away from you, as abominations, the idols which now take His place. And how noble shall be that time of unison between God and men! even the ground shall give forth larger increase, the labouring bullock work more easily, and dry mountains be well watered (cf. Joel iii. 18): and if the lower world became more glorious, how much more the higher,—the light from above; so that the moonlight shall be then like sunlight, and the sunlight equal to that of seven of the present days! But, at the conclusion, with equal beauty and force it is added, that that happy time can only begin on the great day of judgment and battle; wherein, on the one hand, the towers shall fall, all *i.e.* which among men is great and lofty; when, on the other hand, the miracles of the true Kingdom of God commence. This forms the transition to the following strophe.

(3) Here we have a picture in even warmer colours of the great Day of judgment, formed upon the image of the great deliverance from Egypt. The *name* of Jehovah—Jehovah as far as He can be

revealed—shall come from the distant heaven, fearfully terrible, as in a cloud of fire (cf. Ps. l. 3). With figures taken from this the poem proceeds; figures which, on whatever they may have been formed, are as unique as was the issue of the great Assyrian drama itself. That the Assyrians would advance in blind fury against the Temple had been foreseen by the Prophet (cf. xxix. 1—7, x. 28—34): but his firm faith in the indestructibility of the true Sanctuary, and a glance up to the true God, brings most clearly before His transfigured eye, how this day shall be rather a high festal day, wherein Jehovah Himself, amid the jubilant shouts of His people, provides Assyrians for a sacrifice; His breath is like a torrent suddenly reaching to the neck to carry them away for sacrifice, but with the winnowing shovel of deceit, and with an overmastering but misleading bit, such as wild beasts are tamed with (cf. xxxvii. 29); taking them to the Sanctuary, there to wreck them, so that they shall be unable to find what they would destroy: whilst the redeemed sing and exult as at the most cheerful festival, when the people with unmixed joy go up into the Temple to the Rock of Israel; whilst Jehovah appears as a warrior from above in a majestic tempest, wherewith He terrifies and annihilates the evil-doers. The Assyrian shall tremble before Jehovah's thunder and rod, while every stroke which falls upon him from above is greeted from below with joy and with offerings. For from the rod or chastisement of Jehovah, *firmly grounded*, inevitably destined, there is no escape; the pile is prepared, even if necessary for the king of Assyria himself; it needs only the fiery breath of Jehovah to kindle it. With which words, leading back to the figure in the first verse, the strophe concludes.

(4) The Prophet here descends once more to his immediately

practical purpose, the exposing the folly of the Egyptian scheme. He proceeds to shew how foolish and unnecessary it was; foolish in supposing that they, wise as they are, can hide their counsel from God, who had already brought on evil (*i. e.* has announced it), and, as He here alters His purpose, will certainly fulfil it alike against the evil-doers who seek such help, and against the Egyptians. How unnecessary, in that His readiness to help had been already promised: and though never so many heathen encamped about the Sanctuary, threatening the hill of Zion, He would descend in might, as in the image of the Lion of God, an unterrified Lion with fearful roaring against the prey, he sees before him, or rather like birds who brood over and protect their nests (Deut. xxxii. 11): and, in truth, His mere sheltering them, His gracious passing over them, as at the Passover (Exod. xii. 13), is itself deliverance and redemption. O return then in penitence to Him, who has been deeply injured, (cf. i. 5) while it is yet time! before that time when the idols shall be shamefully cast away (ii. 18—22). Then shall the Assyrian fall before the sound of One higher, in such terror that he, hurrying away in the blindest fear, fails of his own fortress, and his princes in like terror flee, leaving the standards behind them. For, as with deepest meaning is said in conclusion, Jehovah has not in vain His hearth in Zion.

(5) The last strophe describes once more the happiness of that future time, but now in a changed tone. The amendment of the government is here dwelt on. This is described, not in the lofty tone of the earlier strophes, but in language more adapted to the shallow rulers for whom it is intended: the Prophet comes down from his elevated height to the language of plain instruction. Kings

and princes shall then be, what they are intended for, protecting and refreshing by prompt decision in every case: obstinate resistance to the truth, and incapacity to perform their office, such as is now found among the blind and deaf, the drunken and stammering great men, shall no longer be found (cf. xxvii. 7—10), as had been promised already (ch. xxix. 18—24): and that medley of ideas and positions at present found shall have no more place; whilst that this medley exists at present is plain, on looking at the actual facts; for a corrupt good-for-nothing man, a fool, is he who does folly, speaks and thinks corruptly—to sin as well against Jehovah as against his helpless neighbour; and a mischief-maker is he who counsels perverted bad means in order to carry through a wrong which looks profitable, whatever high names and dignities he may bear; while one truly noble thinks not merely noble thoughts, but will stand by them, and shall conquer in the end.

Parenthetical Address to the Women. Conclusion.

(Ch. xxxii. 9—20.)

Only as in a parenthesis does Isaiah add here a like solemn word against the careless luxurious women of the Capital, doubtless after a speech which he had lately made on some other occasion. It resembles that in his earliest writing (ch. iii. 16—24), but returns more quickly by a natural transition to the main subject of the whole passage. His voice here in its emotion rises and falls with the threats and consolations of prophecy, until it reaches its goal in an appropriate admonition.

(xxxii. 9—20.)

Careless women, come up; hear my voice, note my address. After a year and a day shall ye, secure ones, tremble; for the

vintage is gone, the fruit harvest comes not in. Quake, ye careless women; tremble, ye secure ones. Strip you bare and put the girdle upon your loins. On the breast shall they beat for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. On the soil of my people shall come up thorns and thistles, yea, upon all the pleasure houses of the jubilant city. For the palace is forsaken, the multitude of the city cleared away: slope and pleasure tower serve for dens for ever, for the pleasure of wild asses, for the pasture of herds; till on us be poured a spirit from on high, and the wilderness becomes the fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted as a forest, and judgment dwells in the wilderness, and justice settles on the fruitful field; till the fruit of righteousness is peace, and the gain of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever; and my people settle in the pasturage of peace, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places. But hail it shall, when the wood falls down, and the city is brought down to the ground. Blessed are ye who sow by all waters, who send forth the feet of the ox and of the ass!

The women, in this serious time, who live for the hour so carelessly and luxuriously, shall soon be touched in what touches them most nearly, through unfruitfulness and devastation of the cultivated soil, so that great want shall ensue in the houses (cf. v. 10—17, vii. 23—25). The Prophet calls to them yet more threateningly: Tremble, and put on, in place of your rich dress torn off by the rough enemy, sackcloth on your naked body (cf. iii. 24). They shall soon, as mourning women do, beat upon their breasts for the loss of the beloved fruitful fields, on which, nay, on the very palaces of the jubilant city, nothing but weeds grow. For of a surety, as Isaiah here briefly repeats from his earlier utterances, on the place where are now the orgies of Jerusalem, shall be a desert, and where

now on a slope of the Temple hill (Ophel, cf. Neh. iii. 27, Micah iv. 8) are the most graceful pleasure towers, there shall be dens for wild beasts, till an indeterminate time, till a spiritual reformation come, which shall bring a blessing, even on inanimate nature (cf. xxix. 17, Joel iii. 1). But once more it must be added that severe punishments and storms must come first. The hail must come; but when it does, blessed are they who sow in the proper place, near water, and industriously drive their cattle to their work (cf. xxx. 24), and cultivate their field in order one day to reap a harvest! That this is to be taken morally, appears from its forming the conclusion of an eulogium on justice: he only who sows by the water, sows not on barren land: and he only who spares no trouble and pain can hope for a harvest.

BOOK VI.

THE SIXTH WORK OF ISAIAH.

Ch. x. 5—xii. 6.

MEANWHILE Samaria had fallen, B.C. 719, and the whole force of the Assyrians turned against Jerusalem; there came upon it those heavy times of the chastising hand of God, which Isaiah had foretold in all his earlier writings: they came not at once in that special manner which he had imagined—in a siege of Jerusalem (xxix. 1—8); and yet were they indeed times of the most humiliating and lasting distress. The Assyrians had been plainly long looking for a pretext for taking possession of the strong fortress of Jerusalem, and aimed at destroying the kingdom of Judæa, whose religion was wholly unintelligible to them, even as they had destroyed the kingdom of Samaria.

The hopes which the rulers then fixed on Egypt, and the already strong Ethiopian kingdom, furnished them the wished-for pretext; and the new reign of Sennacherib, more violently and remorselessly than any of the preceding, urged on the Assyrian plans of conquest against all the lands of the south (cf. Herod. ii. 141). Under this heaviest oppression the whole kingdom of Judah had for some time

suffered severely. The well-intentioned, gentle king Hezekiah was continually harder pressed and more deeply humbled; the whole house of David, and with it the centre of all the Messianic hopes, kept advancing more evidently to its fall. But Isaiah, in these wholly altered circumstances, was unshaken in his prophetic faith and work. In what way he worked, this Sixth Book gives us the plainest testimony. It must have been published about 713 B.C., and seems to have come down to us tolerably entire, needing only arrangement. Its main part was doubtless—

The Prophecy on the Kingdom of the Assyrians, and on that of the Messiah.

This brings us at once into a wholly new period. It refers to prophecies which had preceded (cf. x. 12—23), and in x. 11 the destruction of Samaria is spoken of as an accomplished fact. The prophetic spirit tells him that the Assyrian power, which had now revealed itself in all its cruelty and destructiveness, can no longer be used as an instrument of divine punishment, but must rather serve directly as the great example of divine punishment. This is what is properly new in this discourse; and it is in accordance with this that Isaiah no longer, as in ch. xxviii., xxxii., forebodes a close blockade and long siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, but rather the speedy ruin of their host so soon as it advances against God's Sanctuary.

This is, in fact, the first plain discourse directed merely against the Assyrians, and must have been occasioned by some new evidence of Assyrian cruelty: it gives merely a passing glance at the faults which before had been so severely rebuked (x. 20—23). Its purpose

is rather, though commencing with denunciations of Assyria, to comfort the much-tormented people; and it goes off into such lovely and inspiring pictures of the happy time to come as are found nowhere else. After the first of the five longer strophes has chastised the arrogance of the Assyrian, the second passes to the impending divine judgment, the special as well as the general; so that the three last are wholly consolatory, first in the thought of the certainty of the fall of the Assyrian at that very moment in which with daring hand he thought to have destroyed the last Sanctuary and asylum on the earth; but, secondly, yet more in the thought of the then possible happy time, as well in its innermost nature (xi. 1—9) as in its foreign relations (xi. 10—16). This brings the Assyrians forward again, and so the discourse returns to its starting-point. The six verses which follow evidently belong to a much later prophet. That Isaiah in this part gives a picture of Messiah's kingdom which, in clearness and definiteness as well as in happy calm and fascinating beauty, so much surpasses his earlier pictures is sufficiently intelligible, when we think how it would stand out in contrast with the now sufficiently known Assyrian empire,—how the suffering endured through this would make the people long for and need the comfort of the Messianic hope.

1. (x. 5—15.)

O Assyrian, the rod of my anger, and who as a rod carries out my fury! I send him against a profane people, and against the people of my wrath I give him a charge, to spoil a spoil and to rob a robbery, and tread it small like the clay of the streets: yet he thinketh not so, and his heart reckoneth not so; but to destroy is in his mind, and to cut off nations not a few. For he

saith, Are not my princes kings together? Is not as Carchemish Calno? is not as Arpad Hamath? or is not as Damascus Samaria? As my hand reached to the gods of the land, whose images are yet more than those of Jerusalem and of Samaria, yea, as I have done to Samaria and its gods, will I do to Jerusalem and its idols! But when Jehovah shall accomplish His whole work on mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I will visit the fruit of the arrogance of the king of Assyria, and the glorying of his high looks, in that he saith, Through my might of hand I did it, and through my wisdom, because I am prudent: I remove the bounds of the nations and plunder their treasures, and cast down, like a god, the enthroned; and my hand found like a nest the wealth of the nations, and as one gathereth abandoned eggs, while none fluttered the wing, opened the mouth, or chirped. Boasteth then the axe against him who hews with it, or glories the saw against him who works it? as if the staff swings its raiser, as if the rod should lift up him who is no wood!

2. (x. 16—23.)

Therefore shall the Lord Jehovah of Hosts send into his bloated limbs consumption, and under his glory a brand shall burn as fire burneth. Israel's light shall become fire, and His Holy One a flame which kindles and consumes its thorns and thistles on one day; and the glory of its wood and fruitful field shall He consume from the soul to the body: so that it is as when a sick man pines away, and the rest of the trees of his forest are easily counted, and a child registers them. Then on that day shall the remnant of Israel and residue of the house of Jacob no longer lean upon him who smites it, but lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. *The remnant shall return, the remnant of Jacob* to the Hero-God! For were thy people Israel as the sand of the sea, but *a remnant should return:*

utter annihilation is decreed overflowing in righteousness. For an end and judgment shall the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, accomplish in the centre of the whole earth.

3. (x. 24—34.)

For thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, Be not afraid, my people which inhabiteth Zion, of Assyria, who strikes thee with his staff and lifts his rod upon thee in the manner of Egypt. For yet a little, a short time, and the indignation is over, and my anger is for their destruction: and Jehovah of Hosts is moving against him a scourge as He smote Midian at the Raven Rock, with His rod over the sea, which He lifts in the manner of Egypt. Then shall on that day his burden come off from thy shoulder, and his yoke from thy neck, for *a young one is destroyed through fat.* He comes by Aijath, passes through Migron, at Michmash he leaves his baggage. They go through the pass, take Geba for their night camp. Harama trembles, Gibeah of Saul flees. Shriek aloud, daughter of Galla: listen, Laisha: answer her, Anathoth. Madmena is moved, the inhabitants of Gabim flee. Yet this day must he rest at Nob: he shakes on high his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. Behold there the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, cleaves the crown through trembling; and the tall of stature are hewn down, the proud are humbled; hewn down are the thickets of the wood by iron, and Lebanon through a Majestic One falls.

4. (xi. 1—9.)

Then shall a shoot bud forth from Jesse's stump, and a green twig grow forth from its roots, and Jehovah's spirit rests upon it; the spirit of wisdom and prudence, the spirit of counsel and valour, the spirit of knowledge and fear of Jehovah; and his breathing is in the fear of Jehovah: and not after the sight of His eyes judges He, nor after the hearing of His ears decides

He, but judges according to equity the oppressed, and gives in fairness judgment to the suffering of the earth, and smites the earth with the staff of His mouth, and slays with the breath of His lips the wicked: so that judgment is the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. Then the wolf shall turn in to the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and young lion and fatted bullock are together, a little child leading them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young lie down together; and the lion eats straw like the bullock, and a suckling strokes the asp's feeler, and on the eye of the horned serpent a weaned child puts forth its hand. They shall not do evil nor corruptly on all my holy mountain: for the earth is as full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.

5. (XI. 10—16.)

And on that day shall the root-branch of Jesse, which stands as an ensign of the nations, be visited by the heathen, and its resting-place shall be glory. And on that day shall Jehovah once more make His hand redeem the residue of His people which is left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Patros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. He lifts up an ensign to the heathen, and assembles the dispersed of Israel and the scattered of Judah: men and women He collects from the four corners of the earth. Then departs Ephraim's jealousy, and the troublesome ones of Judah are rooted out. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not trouble Ephraim. And they fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the sea; together plunder they the children of Moab; Edom and Moab are a hand-grasp for them, the children of Ammon obey them. And Jehovah curses the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and shakes His hand over the Euphrates with the scorching of His breath, and strikes it into

seven streams, and makes it fordable in shoes; so that there is a highway for the remnant of His people which shall remain from Assyria, even as Israel had when it came forth out of the land of Egypt.

(XII. 1—6.)

And thou singest on that day—

I praise thee, Jehovah, for Thou wast angry with me,
Thy wrath subsides, and Thou comfortest me.
Behold the God of my salvation!
I trust and tremble not;
For my glory and my song is Jah Jehovah,
And He is become to me salvation.

Draw ye then waters with rejoicing from the fountains of salvation, and sing on that day—

Give thanks to Jehovah, call on His name,
Proclaim among the nations His deeds,
Publish that His name is exalted!
Make music to Jehovah, that He did glorious things,
Let this be known in the whole earth!
Shout aloud, inhabitants of Zion,
That great is among you Israel's Holy One.

(1) The very first words give the burden of the whole. The Assyrian is in God's sight nothing but a rod to execute His wrath. He has a power entrusted to him for a certain end, namely, to plunder and subdue the neighbouring nations here mentioned. *I send him*, in the present tense, denotes his divine commission. But that is not his thought: he will be independent. He will destroy all the nations he can, boasting himself to be a king of kings, and glorying that all foreign nations had had a like fate before him and his destiny: so that if all heathen nations beginning from the North had been

subjected by him,—although in his estimation their gods were much more numerous and powerful than those of the two Israelitish kingdoms,—if even Samaria's gods were unable to resist him, shall little Judah with its few idols make an exception? Though he speaks as a heathen, the Hebrew opprobrious name for idols makes its way into his speech. But this insolent arrogance, remarks the Prophet interrupting his discourse, shall Jehovah punish at the right time, when He shall finish His whole promised work—for that he boasts to have done it through his own power and wisdom in disposing of nations and kings; or even as a mischievous boy plunders eggs, while nothing ventures to move against him. Has one then ever heard of a tool raising itself against its lord and master, as though it should move him who moves it? The strophe thus returns to the thought with which it opened.

(2) The merited punishment must therefore overtake him, which is here to be more particularly described. Now, indeed, the Assyrian hosts stand like lusty men (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 31); but as consumption soon consumes the fattest body, so does God send upon the fat limbs of the Assyrian a treacherous sickness, so that he soon wastes away like a sick man (cf. xvii. 4), or rather a sudden fire, the wrath namely of God is kindled into fire; fire is kindled under his glory, the general at his head, and soon lays hold of everything, as well the lower, the quickly consumed thorns and thistles, as also the higher, the exalted forest and fruit-trees.

The figures of the sick man and of the burning forest are carried on side by side, according to Isaiah's frequent manner: the more telling figure of the fire however predominates. Then shall the reformed and purified remnant of the people return to its true

helper, and not to its destroyer, such as the Assyrian once invoked by Ahaz. The ground of all hope for Israel rests on its returning to its Hero-God; but it will only be a *remnant* which shall escape: for annihilation has been resolved on, even righteousness flowing on in full streams to sweep away all sinners without exception: for in the very centre of the earth, in Zion, shall God hold this judgment, and how few shall be able to abide it!

(3) Since then the punishment of the Assyrian is certain, be not afraid of him, who now, like the Egyptian of old, lifts over you the taskmaster's rod: for yet a little while, and the heavy hour of God's wrath against Israel is past, and is turned against the Assyrians; and as God once chastised Midian, or rather as He smote Egypt and the Red sea in Moses' time, so shall He now shake the scourge over the Assyrian. It is thus as in the old proverb, "A young one is destroyed through fat." For fat children are the soonest carried off. (There is in the original a play on the similarity of the words for *yoke* and *a young one*, the latter word being here changed into assonance with the former.) And so shall the bloated one (cf. v. 16), the Assyrian, long grown too bloated, quickly pine away; so that Israel casts off his *yoke*, as formerly that of Egypt. He may indeed advance, with well-ordered host, in hasty march against the Sanctuary, spreading terror as he goes, and even in sight of it shake his hand against it: but suddenly comes on him a storm destroying everything, uncrowning the tallest trees and all that proud forest spoken of in verse 18. They are hewn down by the axe; or rather the *Majestic One*, the Hero-God Himself, casts them down and for ever humbles their pride. The graphic description of the enemy's march falls into three divisions: (1) He hurries on from the

north-east over Jordan, enters at Aijath on Judah's territory, and sends his baggage thence to Michmash, the sooner to surprise Jerusalem. On the first day he arrives at Geba, to the terror of the places round; each town must call out to the next the fearful tidings, as in an antiphonal chant—for they can do nothing but flee: but to-day he must rest at Nob, to surprise Jerusalem on the third day: already he shakes his hand threateningly against the Sanctuary. To understand the description more completely we need to know the sites named more accurately, a commencement towards which is offered us in Robinson's *Researches*. That Isaiah is describing here a future march, as he sees it in imagination, is clear from the whole context: the past tense predominates here merely to give vividness to the picture; but we can only conceive his power of describing the march with such particularity and detail through assuming that he had in past time witnessed such invasions. We saw indeed (ch. xxii. 1—14) that the Assyrians had before this made an inroad to the very gates of Jerusalem.

(4) After this great judgment, for the residue purified through their trials the happy time shall come in all its majesty, and with it Messiah. A new green shoot shall blossom forth from the stem of David, however it might look like a withered trunk. On Him God's Spirit rests continually, that Spirit which inwardly is a spirit of wisdom and prudence; as manifested outwardly, the spirit to conceive a firm resolve and resolutely carry it out; in respect to its impulse and end, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of God: and in this threefold cord of true theory, practice, and religion, is comprised every virtue and attained everything godly. He breathes at every moment only in the fear of God as in his natural element: he

judges "not after the flesh:" such power does this give Him, that a mere word from Him overthrows and slays the evil-doers. He thus needs no carnal weapons, as His best armour is righteousness and faithfulness. The further consequences must be a wonderful increase of peace and well-being; all the cruelty and savageness of the earth gives place to love and gentleness: even the wild beasts shall become tame, and a child hardly weaned, without taking harm, puts out its hand to the shining eyes and beautiful feelers of poisonous serpents. Sinners, to sum up in a word, shall be at length no longer found in Zion; for the knowledge of God shall be no more as now, dark and feeble, but inexhaustible like a flowing tide.

(5) But to return to the starting-point. As the discourse started from the foreign relations, so must it return to them. Abroad this same root, or rather tender shoot (ch. liii. 2) of the old stem, becomes through such virtues renowned and honoured far and wide, and stands as a high prominent ensign to which all heathen look, towards which they flow to seek from it prophecy and judgment (cf. ii. 2—4). The salvation wrought by Him will consist (1) in the dispersed both of Judah and of Israel being allowed freely to return to their own land. Israel and Judah shall then live peaceably side by side; for (2) the mutual jealousy and hostility which had caused such suffering to both, specially the destruction of Samaria, shall be at an end; so that (3) as in David's time, with their united force they shall subject all the nations, which, to the west or to the east, since David's time belonged of right to Israel. (*The shoulders of the Philistines* denote in the literal sense their low coastland slowly sloping away from the sea, but figuratively it has reference to an eagle flying at the shoulders of its prey and thus overpowering it.

A grasp of their hand denotes their complete mastery.) Finally, to speak more particularly of Assyria and Egypt, which now seemed the greatest obstacles towards realising this picture of the future, it need only be said that neither can they hinder Jehovah's work: an angry word from Him reaches to the Red sea; a threatening of His hand with a blasting breath of His wrath is sufficient so to chastise the Euphrates that it breaks up into seven small fordable streams; and thus to the greatest part of the captives, namely to those in the empire of Assyria beyond the Euphrates, return is as easy as beforetime to their forefathers coming out of Egypt.

The hymn which follows is plainly not by Isaiah; words, images, turns of sentences are different; besides, the above poem has been completely rounded off to its conclusion; it only loses in beauty and force through this addition. The complexion and style of the passage plainly point to a time shortly after the latter part of the Book of Isaiah was written; it was probably added by a scribe or student, to express his gratitude at the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy.

2. *The Discourse on Ethiopia.*

(Ch. XVII. 12; XVIII. 7; XIV. 24—27.)

These two passages, at present separated, seem to have belonged originally to one discourse—at least we thus get an excellent sense and a prophecy complete in itself; the second passage may have been transferred to its present place, because the later author of the prophecy on Babylon wished to take it as the motto of his own work.

The discourse is plainly but a little subsequent to the preceding; the thoughts in the two are nearly alike, only here expressed more briefly and pointedly.

There had been, as we see from ch. xviii. 1, ambassadors sent from the remote land of Ethiopia to Jerusalem, in order there to take note of the state of affairs in Assyria and Judah, and no doubt also to make proposals for a defensive alliance against the Assyrians. It follows from ch. xxxvii. 9, that this happened shortly before the fall of Sennacherib.

The Prophet might not be reluctant to accede; for the Ethiopians, through the ancient world a people of good reputation, could not be looked on by the Hebrews with the same suspicion as the Egyptians; but yet in the higher divine view he could not accede, for he felt that the deliverance must be looked for from no external source, but from God Himself.

For as in chapter xxix. he was convinced that the enemy would fall at the Temple of Jehovah, or, as it is here expressed more generally, in the Holy Land; therefore the Ethiopians and other heathen had better wait (such is the new thought here added) for the speedy fall of the Assyrian in the Holy Land without help from them, and thus learn to know the true power and greatness of Jehovah, and do homage to Him: the ambassadors may announce everywhere the early fall of the Assyrian.

Such is the substance of the passage. It begins with announcing the eternal hope, notwithstanding the present raging of the nations; it then compliments the Ethiopian people without derogating from the honour of God, and concludes with the plainest and strongest reiteration of his views upon Assyria.

(XVII. 12; XVIII. 7.)

O the raging of many nations, who rage like the raging of seas, and the rushing of nations, who rush like the rushing of

mighty waters! But He rebukes him, and he flees far away, and is as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and as a column of dust before a tempest. At eventide behold deadly terror; before morning he is not! This is the portion of our plunderers and the lot of our robbers.

O land of winged vessels, which is beside the streams of Cush, which sends ambassadors by sea, and in vessels of reeds over the surface of the waters! Go, swift messengers, to the people wide-spread and active, to the people feared since it first was until now, to the nation of might and conquest, whose land streams divide; (and say) All ye inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth, when they raise a signal on the mountain, see ye; when they sound a trumpet, hear ye! For thus said Jehovah to me: I will rest, and in my position behold; like bright heat over sunshine, like clouds of dew in the heat of harvest. For before the harvest, when the blossom is complete and the flower becomes a ripening grape, He cuts off the clusters with pruning-hooks, and the shoots He cuts away. They are together given up to the eagles of the mountains and to the wild beasts of the country, and the eagles summer upon him, and every wild beast of the earth winters upon him. At that time shall homage be offered to Jehovah of Hosts* from the people wide-spread and active, and from the people feared, since it first was until now, the nation of might and conquest, whose land streams divide, to the place of the name of Jehovah of Hosts, mount Zion.

(XIV. 24—27.)

Jehovah of Hosts swears, saying, Surely: as I thought, so it comes to pass; and as I have devised it, it shall stand; to break Assyria in my land, and subdue him on my mount; that his yoke

* Read מֵעִם before עַם in the first clause of verse 7.

may fall off them, and his burden fall off from their shoulder! This is the counsel which is taken concerning the whole earth, and this the Hand which is stretched out over all the heathen! For Jehovah of Hosts has devised it, and His hand is stretched out, and who shall check it?

(1) Everywhere is heard the violent roar of nations, like the rushing of the sea; but rage as they may, His rebuke suffices to frighten away the Assyrian: one night is enough to utterly destroy him; in the evening a deadly terror is sent by God, and before the morning he is vanished. The singular number used of the enemy points to the Assyrian who was then *the* enemy.

(2) This truth, that the Assyrian shall fall immediately in the Holy Land, and that a strange event is impending, the Ethiopians are to take note of: the ambassadors whom this surprisingly active people had already sent to Jerusalem, on returning thence, may give notice wherever they come, calling to all to observe the alarm signal, which shall announce that that great event foretold by the Prophet has already occurred in the Holy Land—that event which is now in figurative language described. That remarkable distant nation, which sends so quickly beyond the Nile its messengers in papyrus skiffs, may themselves contribute to the speedier diffusion of Jehovah's glory: it is with reference to the work here given them that their speed is so much emphasised.

For at this moment God calmly from His place in heaven is looking on and waiting for the right time; but as, in the hottest summer days when harvest time is near, sultry heat with thin vapours long veils the sunshine; the sultry heat will not pass, rain will not come; when suddenly a tempest gathers, all the more

terrible in its destructiveness. This tempest is to discharge itself before the harvest: it seems now as though the Assyrians had little left to strive for; their grapes will now ripen, but before they ripen Jehovah will lay waste the whole vineyard: the arrogant too-swelling clusters and shoots shall be entirely cut off by the sickle: this sickle, as we see from the next verse, casts to the ground a host of such enormous numbers, that the wild birds and beasts can feed on them for one or several years. And then may and shall this honoured people also bring its offerings to that place where the *name* of Jehovah is called upon and enthroned.

(3) The speech now returns to its starting-point, and in plain terms it is declared with a solemn oath that the Assyrian shall fall in the Holy Land. This last strophe resembles the end of a discourse; a short prophecy by itself it cannot be, as neither the Assyrian nor Israel are directly addressed.

3. *The Sign on Egypt and Ethiopia.* (Ch. xx.)

It was natural that Isaiah, who already had given his views on the trust in Egypt, should renew his warnings on every occasion, whether in plain words or in signs, For the hankering in Jerusalem after such an alliance took increased strength through hopes from Ethiopia, which state, at that time very powerful, was looking anxiously at Assyria, and preparing for war against it yet more zealously than Egypt. When then the Assyrian king Sargon (only mentioned in this place—he probably succeeded Salmanassar soon after the fall of Samaria) had sent his general Tartan (2 Kings xviii. 17) against the Philistine city Ashdod, Isaiah foreboded its fall, and foresaw what no one would believe in Jerusalem, that after capturing

it the Assyrians would invade and lay waste Egypt and Ethiopia; he saw in his mind's eye the new spectacle of captives from Egypt led in triumph by the Assyrians through the streets of Jerusalem. Ashdod held out three years—later it held out twenty-nine years against Psammetichus (Herod. ii. 157): but the Prophet was throughout certain of the result; he appeared during those three years without his mantle and his shoes; he was for that time a sign serving to call attention to something strange which was to happen. Only when the fortress had been conquered, and thus the fulfilment of the prophecy drew much nearer, and when the sign had effected its purpose, did the Prophet feel impelled by Jehovah to speak plainly on the humiliation which was to befal Egypt and Ethiopia.

This passage might at first seem an appendix to the long prophecy against Egypt (xxviii.—xxxii.): but as there no mention was made of Ethiopia, it seems that it ought to be put after that mission from Ethiopia to Judæa referred to in chap. xviii.

Ch. xx. 1—6.

In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him (and he besieged Ashdod and took it), at that time spake Jehovah by Isaiah the son of Amos, saying, Go and loose off the prophetic mantle from thy loins and take off thy shoe from thy foot: and he did so, going stripped and barefoot. Then said Jehovah, As my servant Isaiah hath gone stripped and barefoot three years long as a sign and portent on Egypt and on Cush, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, stripped and barefoot, and the bare buttocks are the shame of Egypt. Then shall they tremble and blush for Cush their hope, and Egypt their glory. Then saith the inhabitant of this coast on

that day: So is it with our hope, whether we flee for help to deliver ourselves from the king of Assyria—and how shall we escape him!

That Tartan took the city after three years is implied in verse 3. The prophetic mantle here spoken of, which had merely a shirt under it, is called sackcloth, because like the garment worn in mourning it was made of rough black hair (cf. Zech. xiii. 4, Matt. iii. 4, Rev. xi. 3). One who had only on the shirt was generally said to be naked. It is to be observed in verse 4, as a sign of the better estimation in which the Ethiopians were held, that from the shameful usage which the Egyptians were to suffer the Ethiopians should escape. The indefinite way in which the great men are spoken of simply as *they*, as well as the somewhat contemptuous expression, *this people*, is peculiar to Isaiah. The expression, *the inhabitants of the coast*, while applying principally to the people of Judah, may have been chosen in order to include the Phœnicians and Philistines, who may equally have fixed their hopes on Africa.

Appendix on the Assyrian and Jerusalem. (Ch. XXXIII.)

The following poem must be assigned to the close of the Assyrian trials (711 B.C.), the time when the danger to Jerusalem seemed greatest, when (as we read 2 Kings xix.) Sennacherib would make no terms; he would be satisfied with nothing less than the surrender of the Capital into his hands. But the more violent and insolent the Assyrian became, the nearer the decisive moment, the more strongly did the Prophet raise his voice against them and against all the unrighteousness on the earth; the nearer and more certain became to him the advent of a great judgment-day. In the midst

of earnest prayers to God for help in this time of trial, the stronger rises his threatening against triumphant wrong, the brighter the vision of Messiah's kingdom. But this time of coming judgment ought to be a time of heart-searching for sinners at home as well as abroad. Whether Isaiah wrote this poem is very doubtful: though many words and the whole spirit recall Isaiah, the style is different, and many of the figures are foreign to Isaiah: for the long billowy roll of his sentences we have here rather short and jerky sentences, and the words and thoughts most characteristic of Isaiah are here wanting. The most probable supposition then appears to be that it was written by a pupil of Isaiah, and added later as an appendix to his Fifth Book.

1. (XXXIII. 1—6.)

O spoiler who art not yet spoiled, and robber who art not yet robbed, so soon as thou hast done with wasting, thou shalt be wasted; so soon as thou finishest robbing, thou shalt be robbed! Jehovah, be gracious to us! on thee we trust; be their arm every morning, yea our help in time of need! From the noise of thunders the people flee; before Thy rising up nations scatter themselves; and your spoil is carried away as grasshoppers carry away; as locusts run they run upon it. Exalted is Jehovah, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness, so that the security of thy times is a store of safety, of wisdom, and insight: the fear of Jehovah, *that* is his treasure.

2. (XXXIII. 7—12).

Behold, they cry fearfully* without, the messengers of peace

* Ver. 7, for אֲרִאֵלָם read אַרְאֵלִם, *trembling*, from ראל = רעל. (So the LXX).

weep bitterly. Wasted are the highways, the traveller keeps Sabbath; scorned are cities, disregarded men. The earth withereth, withereth away: Lebanon grows pale and languishing: Sharon is become like the desert, Bashan and Sharon are become bare. "Now will I rise up," saith Jehovah; "now will I exalt myself!" Conceive ye tinder, bring forth stubble: your spirit is the fire which consumes you; and nations shall become slack-lime, thorns cut down to be burnt in the fire!

3. (XXXIII. 13—16.)

Hear, you far off, what I do; and, you near at hand, my might. There quake in Zion sinners, a trembling seizes on unholy ones: "Who shall shelter us from the devouring fire, who shelter us from the everlasting burnings?" He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of violence, who shakes his hands from taking any bribe, he who stops his hear from hearing any murder, and closes his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; rock forts are his protection; his bread is given to him, his waters fail not.

4. (XXXIII. 17—21.)

Thine eyes shall see the king in his glory, shall see a wide open land; thine heart shall think on the terrrors. "Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed, where is he who counted the towers?" The foreign nations shalt thou not see, the nation of obscure unheard-of speech, of stammering tongue without understanding. Thou shalt behold Zion as our festal city; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem as a secure pasture, as a tent which removeth not, whose stakes are never drawn out, and all its cords shall never be broken. But there Jehovah is glorious to us, in place of rivers and broad streams, whereon goeth no galley, nor gallant fleet passes through it.

5. (xxxiii. 22—24.)

For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah our lawgiver, Jehovah our king; He will help us. Thy tacklings hang loose (O Zion!) they stay not the place of their mast, they spread no ensign: yet then is divided spoil in abundance, lame men have taken plunder, and no inhabitant saith, I am sick; the people which dwells therein is forgiven its iniquity.

(1) The plunderer, the Assyrian, little as he thinks it, shall be plundered in his turn, so soon as the exasperated nations turn against him. Little indeed is now left except prayer to God for support. But if it be true that no people in its wickedness can stand before God speaking in a voice of thunder, that voice shall in due season frighten away the Assyrian, so that he shall offer rich spoil to the people whom he cruelly plundered, and who like locusts in greedy haste run upon him carrying away everything. But there is a second ground of confidence, that Jehovah not only dwells on high, out of the reach of man's violence, but that He has placed in Zion a living source of equity, that hidden inexhaustible storehouse of strength in those spiritual forces which are there ever at work.—The variety of person here is very peculiar, and shews the agitation of the speaker.

(2) What a prospect now far and wide! The messengers who were sent to the Assyrians to sue for peace in the most humiliating terms, weep, contemptuously sent back by the Assyrians, crying aloud for fear in the open street: no one ventures to walk abroad openly (Judges v. 6), as the Assyrian spares not towns, in defiance of treaties, nor human life. Nay, the whole land seems to faint at such horrors which it has to look upon, and its greenest and most

flourishing portions have lost their beauty. Such was the report brought back by the messengers sent to sue for peace.

But in this extremity of human wrong the necessity of God's speedy judgment becomes all the plainer and more urgent. Now will Jehovah rise up as in old time (Ps. xii. 6). Their acts and plans are but as dry stubble, which must at once be burnt up by fire, the fire which consumes them being their own godless restless spirit; whole nations are unable to resist this devouring fire of trial and punishment.

(3) But this threatening is not only for the Assyrian and the heathen generally, but for his countrymen as well. For Zion also has sinners to tremble, and the Prophet hears their cry of terror as they see the devouring fire approaching them. But the only comfort which can be given them is, that he only who in his whole life keeps himself pure, is in the true eternal protection, as in an impregnable fortress, kept always well supplied.

(4) But these sad elements in the state put aside, there rests in Zion an eternal sure hope, in which it can calmly contemplate the storms threatening without. Deeply humbled as king Hezekiah now was, and fearfully as the whole land was overrun by the Assyrian, even the Capital threatened; they should yet see the king in his glory, and the land open and clear of the enemy; and with the greater happiness shall they then recall the present time of terror; will think—The Assyrian is not here now, he who used to number the men in order to assign the imposts, who contemptuously weighed the heavy tribute offered to him, and counted the towers of the Capital to see whether there were not too many (Ps. xlviii. 13—14); they should no longer see a people rough in their manners and speech.

Rather we shall see Zion a city cheerful in its festivals, and like a tent which is never removed: then shall we have Jehovah Himself as our ruler, a better protection than broad rivers and trenches to protect a fortress. Let other cities have such (Neh. iii. 8) Zion needs them not, and has a protection wherein no proud hostile fleet can sail.

(5) For Jehovah is to us everything: He will help us. Though Zion be now like a ship shattered by the tempest, with broken shrouds hanging loose, shewing no flag; yet suddenly a high spirit flashes forth in all, even the weak and sick: the sense of forgiven sins (Ps. xxxii. 1) inspires them to their present first object, victory over the robbers. And so the poem comes round to verse (1).

Last Words against the Assyrian.

(Ch. xxxvii. 22—35). Corrected by 2 Kings xix. 21—34.

Isaiah continued very active during this time; and his unshakable stedfastness in trust on Jehovah was now at length to triumph and become the mightiest means of deliverance for the whole kingdom. We have here a testimony to that unflinching higher strength and unclouded gaze with which he sustained the hopes of Hezekiah and his people when the Assyrian, threatened by Egypt, sent to demand with wild threats and scorn contributions from Jerusalem. This passage is no doubt genuine, but not committed to writing by himself, but only later taken into the Book of Kings according to the recollection of his contemporaries. It is therefore without the division into strophes, and the polish exhibited in his other writings. Where the translation here given differs from that in the Book of Isaiah it will be found to correspond with that in *Kings*.

(Ch. XXXVII. 22—35.)

Despises thee, laughs thee to scorn, the virgin daughter of Zion; behind thee shakes her head, the daughter of Jerusalem! Whom hast thou scorned and reviled, and against whom lifted up thy voice, in that thou liftest on high thine eyes against the Holy One of Israel? Through thy messengers hast thou scorned the Lord, in that thou saidst, "Through the driving of my chariots I mount the heights of hills, the far sides of Lebanon, and cut down his tallest cedars, his choicest cypresses, and come to his extremest lodging-place, his fruitful wood! I dig out and drink strange water, and dry up through the treading of my feet all the rivers of Egypt." Hast thou not heard how I did it long ago, from antiquity how I created it? Now have I brought it to pass, and so it is, that I should lay waste strong cities into dismantled heaps; and their inhabitants, short of arm, trembled and waxed pale, became grass of the field and green herb, grass of the housetops—they withered before the stalk came. But thy sitting and thy going out and coming in I knew, and thy fury against me; even because thy fury against me and thy recklessness is come into mine ears, I set my ring on thy nose and my bridle in thy lips, and bring thee back on the way in which thou hast come.

And this is the sign to thee; to eat this year the fallen grain, and the next that which has grown of itself; but in the third year sow ye and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. For the residue left of the house of Judah again strikes root downwards and produces fruit upwards: for from Jerusalem shall an after-growth go forth, and a residue from mount Zion: the jealousy of Jehovah of Hosts shall do this. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor throw an arrow into it, nor advance a shield against it, nor cast up a mound before it. On the way by which he has

come shall he return, and not come into this city, saith Jehovah; and I protect this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

The Assyrian boasting of his rapid successes in Syria and in Egypt is assured by the daughter of Zion that his contempt and blasphemy are really against her God; and that He will lead him back like a wild beast, his purpose unaccomplished. The token given in proof of this and of the coming of Messiah's Kingdom is similar to that given in vii. 14—16, namely, trouble and humiliation soon to come, and as surely the happy times of Messiah. This prophecy differs from the earlier one in that the trouble was now not in the distance, but already upon them. We must, to enter into the prophecy, conceive that it was then the time for harvest; but that through the devastation caused by the Assyrians, or the terror they had caused, there was to be a miserable harvest, nothing but the growth from grains which had accidentally fallen the year before. For the following year it would be not much better. The Assyrian, the Prophet might forebode, would not so soon wholly leave the country; and moreover, according to the view constantly maintained by the prophets, there must first come in the country itself a great reformation; a sifting off and destruction of evildoers must follow, which necessitated a yet heavier national calamity.

As the seventh *fallow year* was followed by a year of restoration of the land to its proper state—a figure which was evidently in the Prophet's mind—so he foreboded that a second year would supervene without tillage, in which therefore they could eat only that which grew of itself: that not till the third year could the small body that should be left enter on and enjoy that happy Messianic

time that was to follow. And thus the discourse comes round to the same confident tone with which it began. Messiah's Kingdom must come, and therefore Jerusalem cannot be wholly destroyed, nor even dangerously beleaguered.

BOOK VII.

THE LAST WORK OF ISAIAH.

Ch. XIX.

THUS then did Isaiah live to witness the downfall of the Assyrian Empire, and the recovery of his country; he saw those glorious times, the aspiration after which he had carried in his heart, and whose picture he had so often painted, the possibility of which had been mainly brought about through his constant incessant labours. Though the fulfilment at that time of the prophetic hope had not quite come up to the Prophet's wishes and hopes; though, in particular, Messiah and His kingdom in its fulness came not, yet a grand example had been given of God's ruling in history: many a strong injustice had been overthrown, and higher rose the confidence in the final overthrow of all heathendom, and in the omnipotence of the spiritual God in Zion.

From the later life of Isaiah we have one very important monument in this prophecy on Egypt. For though we have some few words and modes of writing not found elsewhere in this Prophet, and though the whole is wanting in Isaiah's usual force and condensation, this Prophet shews all that is most distinctive in the language, the

style of poetry and the thoughts of Isaiah. We have therefore no ground for doubting its authorship, and may refer the somewhat feebler complexion of the whole and the abated fire of the language to the Prophet's advancing age. The historical traces found in it point likewise to a period considerably later than that of the former prophecy. Of the Assyrian Empire there is no longer a trace: though the internal divisions in Egypt would prepare the way for an invasion—and in earlier prophecies this had been threatened—no such danger to Egypt is here referred to. Assyria is indeed spoken of, but in quite another manner, as humbled and not wholly removed from repentance and the acknowledgment of Jehovah; while the humbling of Assyria seems thrown into a remote background. We may consequently suppose an interval of about ten years between this prophecy and the last.

There is unfortunately lacking to us that accurate knowledge of the history of Egypt at that time, which would have been of the greatest importance for elucidating this passage. It presupposes dangerous inner disturbances, rebellions, and convulsions in Egypt. These must have been, in their causes at least, identical with those of which later Greek authors tell us something (Herod. ii. 141, 147, 151; Diodorus i. 66); but more definite information is wanting. But in what spirit generally a prophet would hear of such threatened civil wars and misfortunes in Egypt, and what hopes they must arouse in him, especially at such a time of external victory and deliverance at home, cannot be doubtful. If that ancient land of science and wisdom, which continued sunk in the most besotted idolatry and superstition, was to be so heavily visited; if its whole condition, its moral condition in the state, and (what in the mind of antiquity

was intimately bound up with it), its natural condition also, in spite of all its artificial institutions, threatened to be so deeply shaken and disturbed; the Prophet could think of but one gleam of light and hope for Egypt—the thought that Jehovah would through these strong remedies disperse the old errors, and emphatically impress on that besotted people His own eternal truth: Jehovah will then make the Egyptians know Him. He comes as in a flying cloud into the land, to perplex and punish it; but not merely to destroy it, rather that it, when it had called in vain to all its false helps, might turn at length to the true Helper and Deliverer. With this last prospect and hope the Prophet's heart bounds up: he forebodes indeed that a single chastisement will not accomplish at once the great work; that Egypt, hostile from the earliest antiquity, would only gradually acknowledge and reverence God and His people: but it is clear to his spirit that at length the Divine Will must be accomplished; that in the end the fear and religion of Jehovah must bind the three kingdoms, Israel, Egypt, and Assyria, into one body in brotherly unity. Never had this been foretold so grandly and distinctly, but these times were of the nature to give birth to such hopes (Ps. lxxvi.), and Isaiah was the great Prophet whose spirit could rise to the thought, and with this most blessed anticipation, as with the noblest legacy to posterity, now end his long life.

1. (xix. 1—4.)

[Burden upon Egypt.]

Behold, Jehovah rides upon a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and there totter the idols of Egypt before Him, and Egypt's heart melts within it. I arm Egypt against Egypt, so that they fight, each one against his brother and each one against his friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. Emptied

out is Egypt's spirit in its midst, and its counsel I destroy; so that they turn to enquire to the idols and to the spirits, and to the ventriloquists and to the soothsayers: but I give over Egypt to a cruel lord, a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts.

2. (XIX. 5—10.)

The waters disappear from the sea, and the stream fails and is dried up; stinking are the streams, low and dried up the rivers of Egypt, bulrush and reed languished. The meadows by the River, at the margin of the River, and all land sown by the River, withers, is carried away, and is not. Then sigh the fishermen, and mourn all who cast the hook into the River; the spreaders of nets on the surface of the water are disheartened. There grow pale the workers in combed flax and the weavers of cotton; and its foundations are broken up, all its journeymen are troubled in soul.

3. (XIX. 11—15.)

Mere fools are the princes of Tanis, Pharaoh's wisest counsellors are a stupefied council: how can ye say to Pharaoh, "A son of wise men am I, a son of the ancient kings"? Where are they then, thy wise men, that they may tell thee and know what Jehovah of Host has purposed upon Egypt! At a loss are the princes of Tanis, deceived are the princes of Memphis! and these have misled Egypt, the corner-stone of its castes. Jehovah has mingled in its midst a spirit of staggering, so that they lead astray Egypt in his every action, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit. And Egypt has no work at which there can work, head or tail, palm-branch or rush.

4. (XIX. 16—20.)

On that day shall Egypt be like women, shall tremble and quake before the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of Hosts which

He shakes over it. And the land of Judah shall be for convulsive shaking to Egypt; so often as he recalls it he shall quake, before the purpose of Jehovah of Hosts which He purposeth against it. On that day shall there be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the language of Canaan and swearing to Jehovah of Hosts: City of Fortune* they shall name one. On that day shall Jehovah have an altar in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar by its border for Jehovah; and it shall become a sign and witness to Jehovah of Hosts in the land of Egypt, that, shall they cry to Jehovah before their oppressors, He will send them a helper and champion and free them.

5. (XIX. 21—25.)

Thus Jehovah makes Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians knew Jehovah on that day; they serve with offerings and gifts, and vow to Jehovah vows, and pay them; Jehovah smites the Egyptians, keeps smiting and healing, so that as they turn to Jehovah He is intreated of them and heals them. On that day shall there be a road out of Egypt into Assyria; the Assyrian comes into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians do homage with the Assyrians. On that day shall Israel be the third part with Egypt and with Assyria for a blessing in the midst of the earth, by which Jehovah of Hosts blesses, saying, "Blessed be my people Egypt, and my handiwork Assyria, and Israel mine inheritance!"

God is now about to visit Egypt more severely: the outbreak of a civil war makes this certain. Egypt at that time consisted of several kingdoms, of which Tanis and Memphis were the nearest to Judæa. In their distress they should turn to the false gods and soothsayers, but in vain, for the issue should be the rise of a single

* Ver. 18, read חרס for הרס with the Vulgate.

cruel lord. (This was the Prophet's surmise, and therefore does not prove that this was written after the accession of Psammetichus.)

(2) But the more artificial was the whole condition of Egypt, the more would it suffer with the confusion and disorders in the government; as though nature itself should share in God's wrath, should lose her power and beauty, and shew herself angry against the unworthy inhabitants. So soon as nature shewed herself less bountiful, the results would soon be generally felt. So soon as the waters in the Nile and its countless tributaries dry up, there sicken not only the water-plants, such as the papyrus, but likewise the rich meadows and fields of grain. The various tribes or castes of Egypt must feel the blow, so that they are at their wits' end. The lowest caste will feel it more directly, for only while nature is undisturbed can they continue their quiet daily life: among these, first the fishermen, so numerous in ancient Egypt (Herod. ii. 93); then the not less numerous weavers of all sorts, in short all its lower orders working for their daily bread, the broad and necessary *foundation* of a state (v. 10); similarly in v. 13 the caste of priests named the corner-stone, the principal stone in the edifice of the Egyptian castes.

(3) But the higher orders likewise, who in manifold ways shared in the government and surrounded and advised the king, have lost all their counsel through the blow; the wisest among them are like a stupefied council, and vainly boast of their hereditary descent from the wisest priests, sages, and kings. If they were indeed wise they should be able to explain what should happen—Jehovah's purpose; but this they cannot; those who should lead, *the corner-stone of the castes*, only mislead. It is plain then, as a true prophet

knows, that it is God who has mingled and given them to drink this spirit of giddiness and stupefaction; so that the people, led astray by its own leaders, only stagger like a drunken man, and no single action comes from a well-formed plan to be carried out by their united action.

(4) The general terror thus engendered among the Egyptians, the proved futility of their ancient faith, the shaking of Jehovah's powerful arm, give the first possibility for their confession and amendment: in this their stage of terror before Jehovah, they must recall with terror the people of Jehovah, who are the exponents of His dignity and His truth, the living mediators between Him and the heathen: the thought of Israel shall cause them then a convulsive shaking from terror. The passage from this first terror to true conversion the Prophet imagines very truly as gradual and local. At first there are only, perhaps, five cities in Egypt in which Jehovah is honoured; it may be by Israelites who had settled in Egypt, as formerly in the time of Moses (*five* corresponds here to our *four or five*, xxx. 17, xvii. 6): one however of these shall so plainly and wonderfully be placed under the divine protection, that they shall call it the City of *protection* or of *fortune*. Or, God has at the first only one altar in the land, and perhaps at the boundary (the usual place for cemmemorative pillars), but that will serve for Him as a token and witness to the Egyptians, that if under the oppression of their tyrants they ask help of God at this one altar, they shall not ask in vain. God will send them a strong helper, like a Moses or a David, who shall deliver them.

(5) Thus the joyful relation between Jehovah and the Egyptians shall so work its results, that the more He reveals Himself to them

as the Righteous and the Holy, the more willingly and practically shall they discern in Him One who in His chastisement devises only their good, and shall turn wholly to Him. And then at length comes that longed-for time, in which one single peaceful road with free intercourse binds together the three nations now at enmity; when Israel shall no longer have exclusively God's higher blessing as the chosen spiritual people, but shall share, as one brother with the others, his Father's blessing. Designedly the same words of blessing with which Israel had once been blessed by Jehovah are now extended to Egypt and Assyria.

We have thus come to the end of Isaiah's acknowledged works. That many of them have been lost admits of no doubt; fragments however have been probably incorporated by other writers. Thus, *e.g.*, the verses xxvii. 9—13, which have been incorporated by the later author of xxix—xxxvii. shew unmistakeably the true spirit of the Prophet. The three last of these books seem not to have been, like the four earlier, edited by the Prophet himself.

BOOK VIII.

UNKNOWN AUTHORS.

Towards the End of the Banishment.

IF among the Prophets, as the time of the banishment drew near, we can trace a decline in the prophetic activity, and in the writings of Ezekiel can trace a gradual decline as the time of captivity was lengthened; it seems at first surprising that the prophetic power towards the end of the captivity flourished with new vigour, and produced fruits which in many respects may vie with the finest productions of its most flourishing period. Surprise however vanishes on closer consideration; for, in truth, it must have seemed as though, since the Exodus, no event of such importance had occurred in the nation's history as the gathering the nation together and redeeming them from their dispersion in the east of Asia. One of the great days in the world's course was at hand: the whole of the known Asiatic world was, it seemed, to be through Cyrus transmorphosised; and not one of the nations who had suffered from the Chaldæan oppressors could look forward with intenser hope, and at the same time with a more spiritual eye, than could that ancient people, which had long accustomed itself to look on all the events of the World in their bearing on the Eternal Kingdom of God which lived in them.

As the whole nobler element in Israel was thrilled through with new ecstacy of hope, so was it eminently with prophecy.

No period is generally more favourable to the prophetic activity than such a time, which, in trembling expectancy of great changes in the world, looks forward to the close of an old rotten state and the opening of a new better one. The old deeply-rooted sins, which in the quiet sluggish course of things increase unheeded, or, at least, are hard to root out, can then be more clearly observed and struggled with. The eternal hope of the full manifestation of God's Kingdom feels less thwarted, and more strongly is it felt that now or never must a true amendment of the whole life be carried into effect. There is a prophetic atmosphere around, which stimulates both the teacher and the taught. The events in their time had similarly stimulated Isaiah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, but the impulse now given by the approaching fall of the Chaldæan empire was far stronger and decided than any felt before. That fall, and the return of the redeemed Israel, which Jeremiah and Ezekiel had beheld from far, was now actually to come to pass.

But though the earlier hopes sprung into new and more vigorous life, one important exception makes itself felt. Though hopes were now generally brighter than in the older Prophets, we miss wholly the Messianic hope in its more restricted sense, the hope of a Redeemer from the stem of David: Cyrus is now the Messiah.

When some less far-seeing Israelites murmured at the loss of an Israelitish Messiah, they were sufficiently answered by the great Prophet in ch. xlv., and reminded in other passages (lix. 16, lxiii. 4) that the delivery comes ultimately from Jehovah alone. The prophecy gained tenfold when the vision of the conquering Prince of

David's house gave place to that of the wholly spiritual importance and destiny of Israel, as the peaceable and gentle converter of the heathen. Through this modification, however, the old hopes of a Messiah of Israelitish race were in no way destroyed, only for a time thrown more into the background. And so, when the times of Cyrus with their then glorious hopes passed away, and all seemed to have subsided into the old sluggish groove, we see in Haggai and Zechariah the hopes of a Messiah from David's line again prominent.

It may hence readily be understood that a good number of prophets might appear suddenly, as in fact is plainly declared Isaiah xl. 3—8, lii. 8. And on looking closer into the events of that time, it is apparent (xxiv. 14—16) that important differences prevailed among them with respect to the conception and treatment of the great question of the time; one prophet looking more with simple joy and comfort to the happy side of the deliverance, while another more deeply and anxiously brings boldly to the light the more secret sins of Israel at this time, with all the earnestness of prophetic rebuke and exhortation, in order that the people may enter upon the new period properly prepared and inwardly purified. We find, in the next place, that the voices now heard not only came from places widely apart, the people being so widely scattered (Isaiah xxix. 14—16), but that the intervals in time were likewise considerable. But in one respect the prophecies of this transition period are alike, in so far as they shew themselves works only written, not first spoken. With the earlier prophets every book and almost every chapter reflects to us in the background the Prophet's public working; even in Ezekiel's book a beautiful portion

of his public life and working, of that at least prior to the fall of Jerusalem, has been woven in: but now, after the people had for several years quite lost its freedom, and the captivity had silenced public preaching, the prophets found writing the only medium open to them. The writings to which this excited time gave birth reflected the feelings of the passing day with the greatest freshness and the warmth of life—fresh from the heart, but yet only as the private inspiration of the individual. This, in fact, is one of the chief tokens by which we separate these from the writings of the earlier prophets: there are a hundred others, but this one is of the greatest importance.

Whoever really knows the older Prophets will feel that passages which in every respect shew themselves mere pieces of composition, belong to quite a different circle of productions. And yet, in their own line, these are far more life-like, original, and powerful than the writings of Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Such passages as Isaiah xl. or xlii. 1—4, may be reckoned among the most brilliant passages in any prophetic writing, both for sublimity of thought and corresponding beauty of expression.

Still, founding our comparison on the whole then written, it is apparent that such passages as those cited stand forth as prominent peaks from a table-land: the language, occasionally gaining a lofty elevation of purest inspiration, sinks again, for the most part, into the diffuse pictorial style, with difficulty coming to the point—the mark of the later period. We easily see that merely literary prophets, such as we have here, are infinitely removed from that fulness drawn from practical life, and that stream of thought derived from their own experience, which we are struck with in Isaiah, and

even in Jeremiah. Striving once more towards the old prophetic elevation, borne upwards by the enthusiasm, the product of the time, these fugitive sheets cannot wholly resist the strong tendency to decline in prophecy. The reproduction of earlier prophecies, with the many purely rhetorical passages (such as *e.g.* Isaiah xlvii., lx.), points, as with Ezekiel, to a time when public preaching was silenced.

If now we ask why in the older writings the name of the Prophet was so well and so certainly preserved, while in these later prophecies it has been lost, the true reason is that these earlier prophets wrote only when they had already publicly spoken and worked, and if not conquered, at least made themselves a name, so that their books served as a memorial of their life and work: these prophets, already renowned before they wrote, found many occasions for inweaving their name into their works.

But the writers of the closing period of the exile would add no weight to their writings by adding to them their unknown name. A mere writer had then no occasion for putting his name to his work; and as certainly as the poets who wrote the Book of Job and so many of the Psalms, and the writers of the historical books generally, wrote anonymously, and thus soon became unknown to the following generations, so with the writers of these fugitive sheets, the more on account of the wide extent over which the Israelites were dispersed.

How easily such a flood of anonymous writings, but writings which, from their coming more home to the spirit of the times, could be joined on to and mixed up with writings of an earlier Prophet, such as Isaiah, is shewn in an earlier part of the Author's

work. But since such writings were never written under the name of Isaiah or any other ancient writer, names such as the *Pseudo-Isaiah* are among the most unjust which our time has produced.

The case is indeed somewhat different when such chapters as Jerem. l., li. claim to come from the Prophet, if we take the superscription as genuine: here we have the first example of a passage written in the name of an older prophet of Israel. The case of the smaller section of Isaiah (xxxiv., xxxv.) is somewhat similar; but this is not written in the Prophet's name, it is written as an exercise in composition, and in imitation of Isaiah's figures and language, and appended to a larger work of his.

Earliest Anonymous Writer. Isaiah (Ch. xxi. 1—10).

This short section is by all tokens the earliest. It announces from God the near fall of Babylon with the freshest interest, as quite unknown to the people generally, by which the Prophet, though he has in spirit as yet hardly comprehended it, is as a man quite carried away. For although the fall of Babylon must bring in the end Israel's redemption, the Prophet and with him many of his people are living in Babylon as their second home, and sympathise in its weal and woe. Fear then and terror are the first feelings which surprise him in thinking of that great fall, already seen by him in spirit as certain. But the human feeling has soon to give way before the higher certainty, that through Cyrus Babylon and its gods with it must fall; and as the Prophet from his high watchtower has been the first to see it, he must now call it aloud to his much-oppressed fellow-countrymen. Fresh as these feelings are, the language in the two strophes is borne along on the wings

of high newly-excited inspiration and beautiful vividness. Peculiarly fitting is the rare image, nowhere else carried through with such original force, of the *watchman*. This figure however, which pervades the whole line of thought of the first strophe, is plainly elaborated from Habakkuk ii. 1.

The reason why, in this and the following similar passages, the Medes and not the Persians are spoken of as the conquerors is discussed in the Author's work on the *People of Israel*.

Babylon's Fall espied. (XXI. 1—10.)

Burden of the Desert of the Sea.

As we may understand by the sea the Persian Gulf, south-east of Babylon, this title gives in so far a good explanation of the first words of the passage, and may have come from a well-informed ancient reader. For the violent storms over these deserts, see Layard's *Nineveh*, Vol. I. p. 124.

1. (XXI. 1—5.)

Like tempests in the south passing through, it comes from the desert, from the terrible land. A grievous vision has been shewn to me; "The robber robs and the spoiler spoils." Elam, rise; Media, distress; all the sighing I still. Therefore are my loins full of trembling, pangs lay hold of me, like the pangs of a travailing woman. Too disturbed am I to hear it, too terrified to behold it; my heart reels, a convulsion shakes me, the evening of my pleasure has it turned to trembling to me. They prepare the table, gaze at the stars, eat, drink. "Arise, princes, anoint the shield!"

2. (XXI. 6—10.)

For thus said the Lord to me: Go, set the watchman, who shall tell what he sees; and he sees a troop of horse in pairs,

a troop of asses, a troop of camels; and he attends attentively, very attentively. And he called, A lion; "Lord, I stand continually by day, and remain at my watch all the nights!" And behold, here cometh a troop of men and of horses in pairs. And he answered and spake, Fallen, fallen is Babel, and all her idols hath he broken to the earth!

O my threshing-ground and son of my floor, what I heard from Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, I have shewn to you.

There is a dull sound from afar in Babylon, like tempests coming on over the desert towards the south-east whence the Elamites would come, the more terrifying as every desert is in itself a land of horror (xiii. 20—22, xxx. 6). And what means the distant storm in that horrible land? The Prophet knows through a vision from above, and announces that since the robber and spoiler (the Chaldæan) still continues to rob and spoil, in order at length to still the sighing of those oppressed by them, Jehovah has summoned against him the Elamites and Medes.

But the substance of this vision is at first indeed grievous, threatening serious results, as prophesying a bloody destruction of Babylon, where are living many of the dispersed Israelites. His pleasant evening, the time of cheerful rest and relaxation, he feels suddenly changed into a time of terror and trembling—for surprise and storming are usually attempted by night; and the Prophet too plainly forebodes that drunken careless Babylon will also be taken in the night: and so—while the great men of Babylon prepare the banquet, ask of the stars whether any danger be nigh, and (as astrology must necessarily deceive them) carelessly give themselves up to feasting—suddenly comes the cry to arms.

(2) But, as the first announcement of the oracle was too brief,

the Prophet resumes his account more fully. Here, he would say, is a watchman, who looks better into the heavens and catches the heavenly voice more clearly than all the astrologers of Babylon. There is in the Prophet himself, as it were, a double personality, that of the watchman with his eye directed upwards, and that of the speaker. This Prophet then had long set *his watchman* by divine direction. In those seen approaching in troops of horses, asses, and camels, we discern the Persians (Herod. i. 80).

For long the watchman watched in vain, and was now like a lion moaning and sighing to the Lord: how incessantly he watches, yet all in vain! when suddenly he espies the troop whose onward march had before sounded to him like the rumbling of a distant tempest, and in great emotion he calls out what he had heard from heaven as to the destination of this troop, that Babylon, namely, was on the point of falling; and—of happiest augury in the eyes of those who hated idols, and a proof that Jehovah had sent him—that Cyrus was breaking to pieces all the idols of Babylon. The Prophet's first horror is now changed into happy confidence, and he feels he must call out the tidings to his oppressed down-trodden countrymen, the threshing-floor of the Chaldæans (Micah iv. 12—13, Jerem. li. 33), to the sons of their floor, those, that is, who are in near relation to it as is the grain to the threshing-floor: those sighs which Elam and Media were called on to still (v. 2) are those especially of the Israelites. As the language is here hurried to suit with the hurried nature of the intelligence, the long anxious waiting being only indicated in v. 8, it is natural to suppose that, in v. 9, *he answered and spake* refers back to something told him by God in that voice which he tells us (v. 7) he was listening to catch.

We must not suppose that the clear references to the particulars of the fall of Babylon shew that the passage was written after it: but doubtless the way its predictions were fulfilled must have assured it a wide fame and speedy publication, to which it is plainly indebted for its place among the writings of Isaiah.

Second Anonymous Writer. (XIII. 2—XIV. 23.)

For the first of these chapters the writer seems to have had before his mind the Books of Joel and Zephaniah; for the second, Ezekiel xxxii. served as a model for thought and subject; for the style of poetry, Ezekiel xix. This prophecy might be supposed written by the same hand as the preceding, only a little later, at a time when Babylon's overthrow was nearer, but still not accomplished. The resemblance, however, is not sufficient to warrant us in assuming this as certain: the chief point they have in common is that they were both written in the East, if not in Babylon, while the author of the long section xl—lxvi. wrote in Egypt, somewhat later. That this last-named writer was acquainted with these shorter pieces seems probable, as well on other grounds, as from his reference to earlier watchmen (xl. 3—8, lii. 8).

The Certainty of the Fall of Babylon. (XIII. 2—22.)

1. (XIII. 2—8.)

Lift up an ensign on the bare mountain, cry aloud to them, wave the hand that they may come to the doors of the rulers! "I have commissioned my consecrated, called my mighty ones, for my punishment—my proudly exultant ones." The sound of noise in the mountain, like to a great people; a sound of the rushing of kingdoms of assembled nations! Jehovah of Hosts is mustering the war-host; they come from the farthest land, from

the end of heaven, Jehovah, with His instruments of wrath to destroy the whole earth. Howl ye, for at hand is the day of Jehovah; like might from the Almighty it comes! Therefore all hands wax feeble, and every heart of man dissolves: they are terrified, anguish and pains they conceive, in travail like a woman with child: they are confounded each at the other; a face on fire is their face.

2. (XIII. 9—16.)

Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, dreadful with fury and heat of wrath, to lay the earth in ruins, and to destroy its sinners from out of it. For the stars of the heavens and its Orions, let not their light shine; darkened is the sun at its rising, and the moon lets not her light appear. I visit in the world wickedness, and on the unjust their iniquity. I still the pride of the arrogant, and the haughtiness of the violent I bend: I make people rarer than fine gold, and men than the treasures of Ophir. Therefore the heavens I make tremble, and the earth starts from its place, at the fury of Jehovah of Hosts, and in the day of His hot wrath: and like gazelles frightened away, like sheep with none to collect them, they shall turn each one to his people, and flee each into his own land: every one who lets himself be found shall be pierced through, and every one taken falls by the sword; and their sucking children are dashed to pieces before their eyes, their houses plundered, and their wives ravished.

3. (XIII. 17—22.)

Behold, I stir up against them the Medes, who regard not silver and have no pleasure in gold: and bows shall dash to pieces children, and the fruit of the womb they shall have no pity on, the sons their eye shall not spare. And Babel, the beauty of the kingdom, the proud decoration of the Chaldees, shall be as the overthrow by God of Sodom and Gomorrah; no

more shall it remain nor be inhabited for ever, nor shall an Arab pitch his tent there, nor shepherds there make their camp: but there encamp on it beasts of the desert, and their houses are full of martens, and there dwell ostriches, and satyrs dance there; wild cats cry in his high towers, and dragons in the pleasure-palaces: and near to come is her time, and her days shall not be prolonged.

The general prophecy against Babylon indicates in the first strophe the speedy approach of Jehovah; it sets forth in the second the punishment of proud sinners and the violent of the earth as the purpose of this great shaking of the earth, wherein Jehovah Himself seems to come as judge: then, in the third strophe, are described more particularly the wild pitiless Mides, who would utterly destroy Babylon. As these proud warriors had been consecrated, set apart for their work, by Jehovah Himself, it is bidden in verse 2 to summon them by every means, and indeed there is already heard from far the rush of that great army of assembled nations, the instrument for Jehovah's punishment. Then may men howl, for Jehovah's day of universal judgment is near at hand (Joel i. 15) bringing a general panic. The face on fire is an interpretation of Joel ii. 6, as indeed that chapter influences the whole of the thought and expression here. The Day of the Lord is then described; heaven itself it seems must become darkened (Joel ii. 10), to destroy amid general devastation the mighty proud ones of the earth. The whole universe is shaken in the fury of Jehovah rising up to punish; the millions living together in Babylon from the many subjected nations shall attempt to escape, each one into his own land.

The wild remorseless destructiveness of the Medes shall destroy Babylon as completely as Sodom was destroyed (Amos iv. 11), where

now the noise of luxurious revelry sounds in the proud palaces; soon not even a wandering tent or fold shall be seen, but only the horrible demon-like wild beasts shall there lodge, and cry to each other in their strange music.

The Song on her Fall of Redeemed Israel.

Introduction (XIV. 1—4).

For Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and yet choose Israel, and give them rest in their land, so that strangers shall bind themselves to them, and join themselves to the house of Israel, the heathen take them and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall take possession of them for men-servants and maid-servants, and they make slaves of them whose slaves they were, and rule over their taskmasters. And when Jehovah gives to thee rest from thy toil and trouble and from the hard service in which thou wast made serve, then liftest thou up this satire on the king of Babylon, and sayest—

1. (XIV. 4—8.)

How still is the oppressor, still the domineering* fury!
Jehovah has broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of tyrants;
Him who smote the victims with fury, with incessant blows;
Who oppressed nations in wrath, persecuting† them incessantly.
Now rests and is quiet the whole earth, they break forth into shouting.
The cypresses also rejoice over thee—the cedars of Lebanon;
"Since thou layest low, no destroyer will come up against us!"

* Read in verse 5, מרהבה for מדהבה.
† Read in verse 6, מרדת for מרדף.

2. (XIV. 8—11.)

Hades beneath is agitated about thee, to meet thee at thy coming:
There are moved for thee the departed: all the princes of the earth
Start from their seats—all the kings of nations.
They all shall answer and say to thee,
Art thou also reduced as we are, become like us!
Cast into Hades is thy majesty, the sound of thy harps:
Spread beneath thee corruption, and thy covering the worm.

3. (XIV. 12—15.)

How art thou fallen from heaven, bright star, Son of the Morning!
Art cast down to the earth,—the layer-low of nations!
And yet thou saidst in thine heart, "To the heavens will I ascend,
Above the stars of God will I raise my throne,
And sit in the mountain of the assembly (of God), in the extreme north;
Will mount over the heights of the clouds, make myself equal to the Highest."
But to Hades thou art brought down, into the extremest depths!

4. (XIV. 16—19.)

They who see thee will stare at thee—thee they will reflect on:
"Is this the man who made the earth tremble, made kingdoms totter;
Made the world into a wilderness, destroyed its cities,
Released not his prisoners homewards?
All the kings of nations together rest in honour, each one in his house;

But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominated branch,
Covered with slain men, pierced through with the sword, like a trampled-on carcase."

5. (xiv. 20—21.)

[Those who go down to the stones of the grave]—with them art thou not joined in burial,
Because thou hast destroyed thy land, hast murdered thy people.
Never for eternity shall the seed of the wicked be renowned!
Prepare slaughter for his sons—for their father's guilt,
That they rise not up and conquer the world, and
Fill the surface of the earth with tyrants.*

Thus I raise myself against them, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon name and remainder, and shoot and sprig, saith Jehovah: and I make it the inheritance of hedgehogs and swamps, and sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts.

[The words in brackets in verse 20 are transferred from verse 19. The sense is thus much improved, as well as the structure of the work.]

The most remote cause of this shaking of the world is that God may give rest to His people after their hard toil and suffering. This rest, noticed among them amid the convulsions of the world, shall make men feel that there is something higher in the religion of Jehovah; they shall consequently join themselves to them, and escort them back into their own land, where the relation between them and their former masters shall be reversed. In the rest there given them they shall join in a song on the fall of the king of

* For ערים read עריצים, as in xiii. 11.

Babylon, which begins like an elegy, but must change into a song of triumph.

Of the five strophes of this poem, the first sets forth the refreshing calm which fills the whole earth after the fall of such an oppressor of the nations and the ceasing of his long cruel oppression, with the rejoicing upon earth thereupon: in this joy the cedars of Lebanon take part (xxxvii. 24).

(2) And when the eye looks away from the upper to the lower world, no pleasanter spectacle awaits the fallen king. He comes there (Ezek. xxxii. 21) among the princes of the earth who had died before him—but these give him no friendly welcome. In unwonted emotion, frightened at the arrival of such a tyrant, the shadows, otherwise so still, come to look at him; but their fright is changed into derision: they call to him that he who thought himself so high and immortal is become feeble and dead like them; with all his majesty and pursuit of pleasure, he comes down to the place where, in place of silken coverlets, worms are above and below him.

(3) The man who thought to fly up above all the stars, and take possession of the holy mount of the gods (Ps. xlviii. 3) and sit there as the Highest—woe to him! How deep into the extremities of the lower world is the brilliant star of heaven fallen, he who laid the nations low, himself cast to the ground like a hewn-down cedar! And what is more—

(4) This cruel prince, unlike the other princes of the earth who rest in honour in their mausoleums, shall not share this honour from men; but his corpse, like that of the commonest soldier among others fallen in the fatal battle, is unburied, and is recognized by

the people, and mocked at as the now helpless corpse of the once, as arrogant as cruel, world-destroyer: though he be an offshoot of a noble stem, they treat him as no better than an abominated branch.

(5) The poem ends with a glance into futurity, and thus towards the conclusion returns imperceptibly to the elevation of simple prophecy; announcing, since he is such a world-destroyer who does not merit even a grave with other princes,—since a wicked man must perish with his equally corrupt race, his likeness shall be for ever effaced in his sons: and Jehovah Himself foretels that He will utterly wipe away Babylon as the seat of incurable corruption, and reduce it to the utter desolation foretold (xiii. 20—22); the land itself, after the destruction of the channels for artificial irrigation, becoming a swamp.

The division into strophes could not possibly be clearer and more certain: the three first divide themselves according to the three great divisions—earth, lower world, and heaven. But yet more important is it to remark here, that each of these five strophes contains seven members, or, if it be preferred, verses. The last strophe alone, breaking off more abruptly, concludes in but five verses: this is plainly in harmony with the structure of the poem as an elegy, as also is the comparative shortness of the second clause of each verse; and thus an excited, truly trochaic rhythm is produced. For the verse, Ezekiel xix. served as a pattern to this prophet.

Remarks on Chapters Omitted.

A few remarks are here added, as an introduction to the remaining chapters, on the chapters here omitted. Those who have, as I would

fain hope, followed with profit and interest the leading of Ewald's work so far, will be interested in learning the way in which he regards the remaining chapters. The remainder, excluding the historical portion (xxxvi—xxxix.), comprises the chapters xl—lxvi. These are all assigned by him to the same author: this author has however, in his view, inwoven in his work writings of earlier prophets, as will be noticed presently. The author of this portion is named by him *Der grosse Ungenannte* (the great anonymous author). Among his special characteristics he notices the marked manner in which amid the jubilant hopes of the time he dwells, though with unwilling heart, on the deeply-seated sins and perverseness which stood in the way of the full realization of those hopes. The solution of the contrast between the high mission of his countrymen and their weakness for carrying out that mission is to be found in the double calling, of Cyrus, as the strong *victorious servant* of Jehovah, of Israel, as the *eternal servant of Jehovah*, to bring peace and deliverance to all nations. To enter into the thought of this *servant of Jehovah*, we must take the term servant in the sense of *a client*. As the client needs from his patron commission and authority as well as protection, so has the patron need of his client for carrying out his high end, and for his glory and the establishment of his authority.

The end then for which Israel is leagued with Jehovah is the purest and holiest conceivable among men—to establish the true knowledge of Jehovah, and with it peace among all the nations of the earth; and this in the right manner, in earnest but gentle teaching, and by holding up the picture of righteousness in God, (as in xlii. 1—4 and elsewhere).

If a mission be glorious like that of Cyrus, to overthrow by the sword the idols and their degenerate worshippers, and to free Israel; far more glorious and more lasting is this mission of Israel! If in some passages (as lxiii. 1—6) it seems as though this prophet still looked for in Israel an empire through the sword, this might be but recollections of earlier thoughts: but, in truth, such utterances as in Zechariah ix. 14 are here used no more of Israel.

This calling of Israel is looked on as something not needing proof, appealing only to the inner consciousness of the people. A sense of this mission had for centuries been felt more or less distinctly by the noblest spirits of the nation: the eternal truths, as they took clearer shape and kept growing in strength, could not but feel impelled to impart themselves to the heathen. But though circumstances had long been preparing the way for such a conception, it was a creative intuition of this prophet which made him find in that conception of the servant of God the true destination and eternal importance of Israel.

In the light of this truth Israel is seen to be something imperishable and indestructible. If the kingdoms of the heathen fall into ruins, and Cyrus dashes to the ground the Babylonian or Egyptian idols; not only will the invisible God be thus acknowledged as the only true and eternal God, but an effectual entrance be opened for gentle instruction by Israel as His ambassador to the heathen, and the estimation of His people be wonderfully increased.

Though individual faithful and conscientious men in Israel had for their faithfulness to Jehovah to contend with the heaviest trials and persecutions, (and indisputably the exiles had seen many such

martyrs, as was probably Jeremiah), Israel as a whole is imperishable, like the *idea* which it represents: for this servant of Jehovah knows that the way to true victory is through the deepest sufferings and trials; that He gives grace to the lowly; that to die innocently for others brings with it the noblest recompense and eternal glory. This is the picture which is held up to reprove or excite the unworthy or indolent in Israel. This servant—Israel thus idealized—becomes to the Prophet an individual, self-conscious, speaking person, somewhat like Wisdom (Proverbs viii.). This conception then is the predominant creative element in the following chapters. This title is sometimes applied to themselves by the Prophets, as in xliv. 26; but it would be an entire misconception of its lofty and spiritual meaning to identify the prophetic body with the *servant of Jehovah;* although the more intensely this mission was realised, doubtless the more loftily and copiously would the prophecy pour forth.

It was observed above, that this writer incorporates passages of some length from earlier prophets: these are of two sorts; first from a Prophet of the time of Manasseh; these disclose to us a time of the deepest trial, disorder and humiliation, but yet of infinite exaltation and glory for the pious and faithful. To this author may be referred xl. 1—2, lii. 13—liii. 12, lvi. 9—lvii. 11. For passages of the second sort may be mentioned lviii. and lix., with some shorter ones, which have many points in common with the language and thoughts of Ezekiel.

Though the portion xl—lxvi. is all from the same author, lxiii. 7—lxvi. is a later addition, added after further development of the history. It seems to have been written not in prospect of, as the

earlier part, but after the return from exile: there seem too to be references to the success or failure of the message from God in the former chapters: thus lxv. 1 seems to refer to such passages as xlii. 10, lii. 6, lv. 6.

Anonymous. (XXIV—XXVII.)

We come here upon a writer of later date than "der grosse ungenannte:" there are not many traces here of the bright jubilant hopes which marked the prophecies written shortly before the return. The new Jerusalem was rising from her ruins, but already it had been observed with sadness that the new state was very small in population and feeble. The most probable date for the prophecy seems shortly before the Egyptian expedition of Cambyses. After the fall of Babylon (in chapter xxiv. assumed as accomplished) new severe convulsions threatened; the Egyptian expedition must have threatened special danger to the Holy Land, since Cambyses was known to be very unfavourable to the new state, as we learn from the book of Ezra: for the young state nothing could be so earnestly wished for as peace (xxvi. 3—12, xxvii. 5), but this expedition, by the mere marching through of the wild soldiers, threatened general plundering and devastation (xxiv. 1—3). At this time then, in great emotion, the Prophet foretels the coming shaking of the world, but he shews also that ultimately only the victory of goodness can result from such storms. This first part takes three strophes: then, after he has led the people to pray to God in this their need, and shewed them how to pray, in four strophes wholly poetical, he concludes with his mediatory prayer and promise of happiness in three more strophes. The language shews a taste for strong and frequent plays on words, and generally for the pictorial and ima-

ginative. Further, the verse in the lyrical picture of the threatening storm is often in triplets, which are capable of a beautiful effect. We notice however throughout, that the Prophet puts together his verses and strophes rather with a musical purpose, and composes them out of older thoughts and poetry: the beautiful passages xxv. 6—8, xxvii. 9, 12, 13, are plainly from more ancient now lost prophecies, the first probably from a prophet of the 7th century, the second from Isaiah. The Prophet's own style is so like that of Ch. xii. that the composer of that short piece is probably the same as added, anonymously, this longer portion to i.... xxiii.

1. *Prophecy of the Coming Judgment.*

The two first strophes predict, in great agitation and a kind of fear alien to the older Prophets (ver. 16), a general devastation by greedy marauding soldiers: the third strophe concludes with a beautiful and glowing picture of the Messianic reign.

1. (xxiv. 1—12.)

Behold, Jehovah empties the earth and empties it out, and turns upside down its surface, and scatters its inhabitants: so that as the people is, so is the priest; as the servant, so is his lord; as the maid, so is her mistress; as the buyer, so is the seller; as the lender, so is the borrower; as the creditor, so is the debtor. Cleared out, cleared out is the earth, and plundered, plundered! Jehovah surely spake this word. Decays, decays away the earth; pines away, decays away the world; pine away the highest people of the earth. For the earth is profaned under its occupiers; for they transgressed the laws, overstepped the right, broke the everlasting covenant. For this did a curse eat up the earth, and they pay for it who dwell in it. For this burn the inhabitants of the earth, and there are left but few.

Decays the wine, decays away the vine, sigh all the merry-hearted. Rests the pleasure of tabors, ceases the sound of revellers, rests the pleasure of the harp; singing they drink not wine; bitter is strong drink to its imbibers. Broken up is the city of emptiness, shut up every house against entrance. Lament over the wine sounds outside; passed away is all joy, gone the pleasure of the land. There remains in the city desolation, and into ruins is the gate smitten.

2. (xxiv. 13—20).

For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth, among the nations, like the beating of an olive-tree, like gleaning grapes when the vintage is over. They lift up their voice, they exult: "For the majesty of Jehovah shout* from the west; for this, in the eastern land, magnify Jehovah; on the coasts of the sea the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel." From the limit of the earth we heard songs, "Glory to the righteous!" But I say, To me consumption, to me consumption, woe to me! Robbers rob, the robe robbers rob. Pitiful fear, pitfall and fall, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the land! For those escaped from the report of the pitiful fear fall into the pitfall, and he who climbs out of the pitfall is caught in his fall: for the windows from above are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. In fractures the earth fractures itself, into splinters splints itself up, tottering it totters to pieces. Shake, shake shall the earth like a drunken man, and flutter like a tent: its transgression is heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again.

3. (xxiv. 21—23; xxv. 6—11.)

But on that day shall Jehovah visit the host of the height in the height, and the kings of the earth upon the earth; and they

* Ver. 14, for עָזְלוּ read עַזְלוּ in the imperative.

shall be imprisoned in prison, and guarded in ward, and not till after many years be released. Then redden shall the pale one, and pale the fiery one; for reigns in mount Zion Jehovah of Hosts, and in Jerusalem, before His ancients in glory. And Jehovah of Hosts shall prepare for all the nations, upon this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined; and destroy upon this mountain the thick vail which vails over all people, and the covering which covers all nations; destroy death for ever: and the Lord Jehovah wipes away tears from all faces, and the disgrace of His people He removes from off all the earth, for Jehovah has spoken it. And on that day they say, "Behold, there is our God, on whom we hope that He will save us; there is our God, let us be glad and rejoice in His help!" For Jehovah's hand shall rest upon this mountain, but Moab be trodden down under Him like stubble in the drainings of the dungheaps. And if he spread out his hands therein, as the swimmer spreads out his hands to swim, he brings low his pride together with his wrists.

(1) The Prophet enters at once on the desolation which shall reduce to the same condition high and low, rich and poor, priests and laymen—(this way of mentioning the priest is one of the evidences of the later date of this passage);—but, looked at from another side, this devastation shews that the earth is profaned by its load of guilt, and corrupt, as though the fire of a divine curse were burning up its inhabitants; while, in the sympathy with it felt by the whole visible world, all the mirth, once so reckless, shall fly from it. The images of the disappearance of wine and mirth are found in Joel, ch. i.

(2) This general devastation shall come also on Palestine. Therefore the Prophet cannot join in this joy, to which many voices call

him from the end of the earth, *i. e.* from Babylon; for he can only think of the immediate prospect of coming *consumption* and *robbery*. He describes the coming devastation in figures derived from the deluge, and by a shaking of the whole earth.

(3) But in the third strophe he looks on to the results which shall follow this destruction of evildoers. Jehovah will hold His Court on the evil powers "in the heavenly places," as well as on earth; and then shall mount Zion see the grand spectacle of all the nations of the earth assembling around it to feast on the sacrificial banquets and receive from Him spiritual food: and then the oppressed people, who have now as it were the vail of mourners over their faces (2 Samuel xv. 30), shall mourn no more. Then shall sound hymns of triumph to the Divine mercy. If Moab is here singled out for punishment, it must be remembered that not only was Moab, according to the tradition in Gen. xix., an unclean people, but that it, like Edom in the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ, was the type of irreclaimable opposition to Jehovah. In the description of the trial and incarceration of the bad Angels we have a similar picture to that in the Book of Revelation, in S. Jude, and in the second Epistle of St. Peter.

2. *Prayer of the Church.*

Each of the four strophes in this prayer consists of seven members: the lively recollection of the fall of Babylon pervades the three first; only in the fourth does Babylon fall into the background.

1. (xxv. 1—4.)

Jehovah, my God art Thou; exalt I Thee, praise Thy Name! for that Thou didst wonders, remote counsels, faithfulness and

truth! for that Thou madest of their city a heap, the fortified city into ruins, the palace of barbarians to be no more a city, never to be built. For this, honour Thee strong people, the city of violent heathen fears Thee. For that Thou wast a fortress to the oppressed, a fortress to the poor in his need, a shelter from the tempest, a shadow from the heat, when the snorting of tyrants is as a storm against a wall.

2. (xxv. 5—12, xxvi. 1—3.)

Like heat in drought bringest Thou down the noise of the barbarians; as heat by the shadow of a cloud He brings low the song of tyrants; and the high fort of thy walls has He levelled, brought low, brought to the earth, even to the dust. On that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah—

A strong tower have we, salvation, give walls and moats.
Open ye the gates, that may enter a righteous, truth-observing nation!
Firm is the hope: peace, peace shalt Thou produce, because they trust in Thee.

3. (xxvi. 4—8.)

Trust in Jehovah for ever, for in Jah Jehovah is an eternal rock. For He has laid low those sitting in pride; the strong city He lays low, lays it low to the earth, brings it to the dust; trample on it feet, feet of the poor, steps of the oppressed. The way for the upright is rectitude: with rectitude weighest Thou the path of the righteous; and the way of Thy judgments—Jehovah, we wait for Thee! For Thy name and Thy remembrance is the longing of our soul.

4. (xxvi. 9—13.)

In my soul I desire Thee in the night, and in my spirit

within me seek I Thee: for as soon as Thy judgments come on the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Should the unrighteous receive grace, he learns not righteousness. In the land of honesty he acts crookedly, and sees not the majesty of Jehovah. Jehovah, when Thy hand is uplifted they see it not: let them see, while they blush, Thy jealous love of Thy people, and let the fire of Thine enemies consume them! Jehovah, shouldst Thou ordain peace for us; for Thou wroughtest for us all our successes: then, Jehovah our God, let other lords beside Thee rule over us; only Thee we praise—Thy name.

(1) In the first strophe Jehovah is praised, in that this wonderful destruction shews, first, that the remotest and, as it might have seemed, impossible decrees of God shall in the end be so fulfilled as might be expected from His faithfulness and truth—for the fall of Babylon had been foretold by Jeremiah; and, secondly, it shews how safe under His protection are the poor and helpless when persecuted by the fury of tyrants.

(2) The next strophe shews how hymns of praise will rise to God in the Temple at Jerusalem: (compare for the images in this hymn lx. 18, and Psalm cxviii. 19, 20).

(3) The third strophe continues the call to trust in Him, who judges men according to the same rule of justice which man must set before himself. The righteous, the faithful only wish for judgment from Him, revelation of His righteousness.

(4) The fourth strophe gives the reason why this judgment should not be longer delayed—that the unjust may no longer abuse God's goodness. May He to whom Israel declares she owes all her successes, in place of this devastating war, bring peace!

3. *Depression Consoled.*

1. (XXVI. 14—20.)

Dead men live not, shadows rise not up; therefore Thou punishest and destroyest them, and removest all recollection of them. Thou increasest the people, Jehovah, Thou increasest the people. Thou glorifiest Thyself, Thou enlargest all the bounds of the land! A magic circle was Thy chastening to them. As a pregnant woman who is near to her delivery writhes in her pains and cries out, thus were we shaking before Thee, Jehovah. We were pregnant, we writhed; when we brought forth it was wind: salvation we produce not for the land, nor are there born inhabitants of the land. O might thy dead live, my corpses arise! Awake and shout, ye inhabitants of the dust, for a refreshing dew is the dew on thee, and the earth shall give birth to the shadows! Go, my people, into thy chambers and shut thy doors behind thee, hide thyself a little moment till the indignation be overpast!

2. (XXVI. 21; XXVII. 1—6.)

For behold, Jehovah comes forth from His place to visit upon him the guilt of the earth's inhabitant, and the earth uncovers her bloody deeds, and hides no longer her murdered ones. On that day shall Jehovah with His sword, the heavy and great and strong, require account from Leviathan the quick-moving serpent, and from Leviathan the scaly serpent, and slay the dragon which is in the sea. On that day, the lovely* vineyard, sing ye thus of it:

I Jehovah am its watcher, every moment do I water it:
That no man injure it I watch night and day:
Anger I have not, encounter me thorns and thistles,

* Ver. 2, for חמר read חמד.

In war should I pass through them, kindle them in an instant;
Unless they take hold of my defence,
Make peace with me,
Peace should make with me.

In the future shall Jacob take root, blossom and sprout Israel, and they shall cover the world's surface with fruit.

3. (XXVII. 7—13.)

Struck He him with the stroke on his striker, or slew him with the slaughter of his slayers?* Casting her off, dismissing her, Thou contendest with her. He removed her with his heavy blow on the day of storm. Therefore by this shall Jacob's guilt be atoned, and this is all the fruit of her putting away her sin; when she makes all altarstones like crumbled limestone, when groves and sunpillars stand (no more). For the strong city is solitary, a cast forth and forsaken district, like the desert; there, pasture calves, and there, lie down and chew its shoots. When her branches dry up they shall be broken off, women coming and kindling them; for no intelligent people is it: therefore its maker has no pity on it, and its fashioner shews it no mercy. And on that day shall Jehovah shake out the ears of corn of the Euphrates, as far as to the torrent of Egypt; while ye shall be gleaned one by one, ye children of Israel. And on that day shall the great trumpet be sounded; and there come those lost in the land of Assyria and those cast forth into the land of Egypt, and prostrate themselves before Jehovah in the Holy mount, in Jerusalem.

[This last strophe is probably a quotation from Isaiah.]

The Prophet, after the prayer of the people, appealing as a middle-man, sets forth in the first place—(1) that there should be

* Ver. 7, read the active for the past participle.

no fretting over the past times, for the dead who rise not again; nor over the Israelites who had been removed for their sins: it must not be forgotten that God is the true multiplier of the people; it was for Him to enlarge their borders: as in the exile they prayed to God, and found His punishment only corrective. Like a travailing woman they trembled in prayer before Him, for that whole time was a time of travail pangs (Hosea xiii. 13); but now it seems as if those pains had been in vain: the Holy Land still remains unsafe and childless (lxvi. 7, 8). O that the shades might return to life! The Prophet summons them from their graves; but the answer comes back from heaven bidding God's people wait but a little time till the coming indignation be overpast. For, as it is said in the next strophe—

(2) God is coming in judgment—but that should be a terror only to the murderers: the three monsters who have plundered and murdered have need to fear—in probable reference to the Median, Persian, and Egyptian empires. Whilst for Zion, which shall then have been proved a vineyard beloved by God, songs shall sound in praise of His protecting providence. He is not a wrathful God; but yet, should thorns and thistles come in His way, His mere passing through shall burn them up. They had better then make peace with Him at once, and lay hold of His protection.—The strophe ends with a promise of a speedy end to the present barrenness and desolation, of which Judah had complained so bitterly.

(4) For after all, it continues, Judah has not been smitten near so heavily, even slain, as the Chaldæan, he who smote it in exile, its would-be murderer. For the atonement of Israel, all that was asked was the putting away of her idols, which she had now

since the exile done. Babylon, on the other hand, as of no understanding, shall be a wilderness for ever, and be like ears of corn from which the grain has been shaken out; whilst the Israelites shall be collected ear by ear, and the dispersed in Assyria and Egypt shall be gathered together in Jerusalem, and there prostrate themselves before Jehovah.

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